



# A Guide for Designing House Alterations and Extensions

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October 2005





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**APPENDIX 1: SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL****APPENDIX 2: SCHEDULE OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RESPONSES AND ACTIONS**

Appendix 1 & 2 are available separately and can be viewed at:

[www.bristol-city.gov.uk/planningpolicy](http://www.bristol-city.gov.uk/planningpolicy)

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### SUMMARY OF POINTS

#### Before you start work:

Find out whether a planning application is required. Contact Customer Services for a 'Householders Guide' and a 'permitted development' enquiry form. Note that a Building Regulations application will be required for most types of house extensions.

#### Get advice if you need it:

If necessary, get skilled technical advice from an experienced architect or surveyor to design, prepare drawings and make an application on your behalf.

#### Follow the design guidance:

These notes will help towards a successful planning application and good design solution. Following the advice may also lead to an early approval of your planning application.

#### Look at your surroundings:

Ensure your proposal respects the context of your neighbourhood.

#### Detailing and use of materials:

Ensure that your proposal fits in with the detailed design and materials of your existing house.

#### Be a good neighbour:

Consult your neighbour if your proposal may affect their home or privacy, or if you will need to gain access for building work or maintenance.

#### Submit full information:

Support your application with clear, accurate drawings showing the existing buildings and what is proposed, any adjoining or neighbouring buildings, and notes to show existing and proposed materials. Photographs are also recommended.





## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out design guidance for homeowners and building designers on the design of house extensions and/or alterations. It is one of a series of documents produced by the City Council encouraging high standards of development and environmental quality in Bristol.

The design guide has been produced in recognition of the visual and amenity impact that extensions can have on the quality of individual houses and the street scene in general. The document provides guidance to assist in the understanding and implementation of Policy B9 of the Bristol Local Plan 1997, and the general urban design policies B1-B7.

### Bristol Local Plan Policy:

- B9 House extensions and alterations will be permitted provided they:
- respect the form, siting, materials, details and character of the original property and its curtilage;
  - respect the characteristics of the wider area, particularly where the property forms part of a semi-detached pair, a terrace, or a formal street pattern;
  - would not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers;
  - retain adequate car parking within the site.

The purpose of the design guide is to set out the Council's design expectations. It is not intended to impose rigid controls over detailed design matters or stifle originality or innovation. The focus is on encouraging good design, by concentrating on the broad issues of scale, height, massing, layout, landscape and parking. The guidance identifies the main design principles and illustrates with examples the issues that should be considered. Bristol City Council is committed to promoting good design and will take a positive view of development proposals that follow the advice set out below.

### Status of SPD 2 and its use in the decision making process

Design proposals for house alterations and extensions should be made in accordance with the relevant policies of the adopted Bristol Local Plan and SPD 2, an important material consideration with significant weight in the decision making process.

SPD 2 has been prepared as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 12 – Local Development Frameworks (2004) and the associated Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. Bristol City Council is currently preparing its Local Development Framework and consequently, the adopted Bristol Local Plan (1997) and its policies will be 'saved' until replaced by Local Development Documents. It is intended to include a policy to guide house and alterations extensions as existing Policy B9.



## 2.0 RESIDENTIAL CONTEXT

Throughout Bristol there is great variety in the type, style, age and quality of housing. Many housing areas have a distinct character which with the quality of the buildings, their layout and landscaping have become much cherished. As every house contributes to the general character of its street, the street scene and neighbourhood, it is important that, where external alterations or extensions are proposed, the changes are in keeping with both the original house and the context of the local area.

Poor house extensions and alterations can have a detrimental effect on an area, the residential amenity of neighbours and may reduce the value of a particular property. Extending or altering the property to a high standard and in-keeping with the original design may, however, add value and enhance the character of the local area.



*Some houses form part of a formal layout such as the above 'garden city suburb' at Seamills*



*There is wide variety in the context and character of Bristol's townscape and architecture*

## 3.0 LISTED BUILDINGS, CONSERVATION AREAS AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Some of Bristol's older houses have statutory protection as 'listed buildings', and appear on the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's 'List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest'. A number of local areas have been designated as Conservation Areas because of their special character or appearance. Tighter planning controls apply to both listed buildings for internal and external works, and in Conservation Areas for demolition and/or development.

Furthermore, alterations or extensions to historic buildings (whether 'listed' or not) in certain parts of the city may have archaeological implications. In Sea Mills, for example, there are extensive Roman remains which could well be affected by even minor works. You should check with the Customer Services Team to find out whether you are affected.

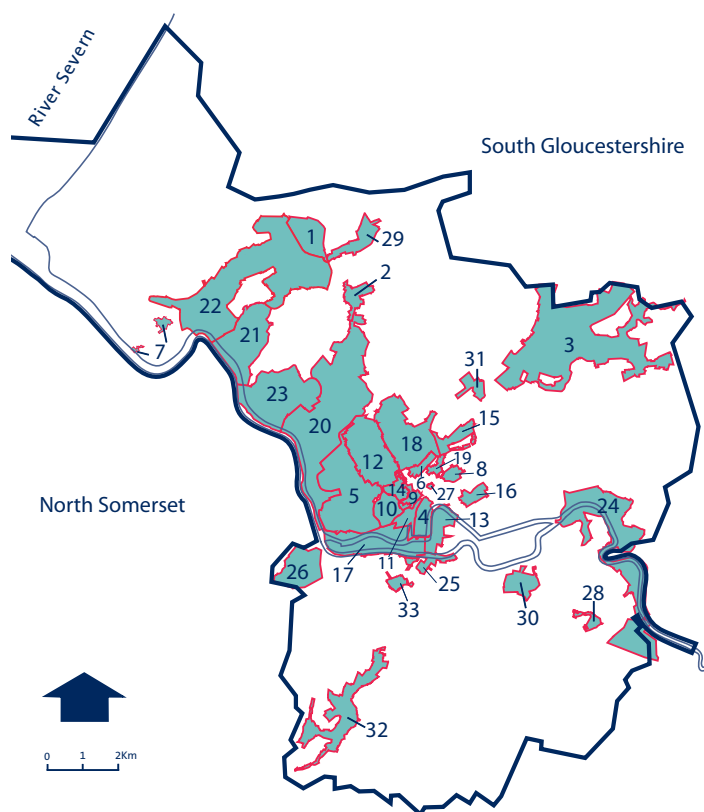
(Further guidance on archaeological issues can be found in the City Council's Policy Advice Note No.4 'Archaeology and Development').

### Conservation Areas

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 Henbury                               | 18 Cotham, Redland and Gloucester Road |
| 2 Westbury-on-Trym                      | 19 Stokes Croft                        |
| 3 Stapleton and Frome Valley            | 20 The Downs                           |
| 4 City and Queen Square                 | 21 Sea Mills                           |
| 5 Clifton                               | 22 Kingweston and Trym Valley          |
| 6 Kingsdown                             | 23 Sneyd Park                          |
| 7 Shirehampton                          | 24 Avon Valley                         |
| 8 Portland Square                       | 25 Bedminster                          |
| 9 St Michael's Hill and Christmas Steps | 26 Bower Ashton                        |
| 10 Park Street and Brandon Hill         | 27 St James Parade                     |
| 11 College Green                        | 28 Brislington                         |
| 12 Whiteladies Road                     | 29 Brentry                             |
| 13 Redcliffe                            | 30 Arnos Vale                          |
| 14 Tyndall's Park                       | 31 Ashley Down                         |
| 15 Montpelier                           | 32 Bishopsworth and Malago             |
| 16 Old Market                           | 33 Bedminster West                     |
| 17 City Docks                           |  |



*A successful extension to an historic property*



*Conservation Area designations in Bristol*

## 4.0 HOUSEHOLDER PLANNING APPLICATIONS

### 4.1 Do you need Planning Permission?



If you live in a house, you can make certain types of minor changes to your home without needing to apply for planning permission. These rights are called 'permitted development'. In some areas tighter planning controls may exist and permitted development rights may have been removed under an Article 4 direction. Other legal restrictions, such as covenants or planning conditions, may also restrict certain types of work or alteration.

If you are in any doubt as to whether you require planning permission you should obtain a 'permitted development' enquiry form from our Customer Services Team. Alternatively, write to our Department enclosing drawings of your proposals and photographs to show the areas that are to be altered or extended. The Council can then clarify whether Planning Permission is required. It is advisable to discuss any proposals with the City Council well before starting work or submitting a formal planning application.

You should write to:

**Planning Services**  
**Planning, Transport & Sustainable Development**  
**Bristol City Council**  
**Brunel House**  
**St. Georges Road**  
**Bristol BS1 5UY**

More information about the planning system is available in the ODPM publication, *'Planning - A Householder's Guide, What You Need to know About the Planning System'*. This explains when planning permission is required, and how to apply for Planning Permission. Copies are available free from the Customer Services Team.

The information can also be obtained on-line at [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk) along with Planning Factsheet 1: Privacy and Overlooking; and, Planning Factsheet 3: Overshadowing.

Furthermore, the Planning Portal - [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk) provides useful advice on planning topics.

### 4.2 Information to submit with your Planning Application

When submitting an application it must be supported with clear, accurate drawings showing to scale your existing house, the proposed changes, with notes to indicate relevant construction details and external materials. These drawings should also show the relationship of your house with neighbouring properties, i.e. the context. It is also helpful if photographs are included with your application showing where changes are to take place.

It is recommended that a suitably qualified architect or building surveyor is employed to act as your agent. Usually they will be able to provide design drawings and other information appropriate to your application.

### 4.3 Public Consultation

Should you submit a planning application, Planning Officers will process your application and consult your immediate neighbours and anyone who may be affected by your proposal. Following public consultation, a formal decision notice will usually be issued within 8 weeks under 'delegated powers'. In a small number of cases it may be that Officers submit a report with a recommendation to one of the council's Development Control Committees. The Committee will make the decision on the application.

## 5.0 DESIGN GUIDELINES

### 5.1 General Points

A house is most people's biggest investment. Building an extension, however, can be expensive and may not increase the value of your home. Financially it might be more sensible to move to a larger house.



*Alterations or extensions should be designed to be in-keeping with the original design of the house*

Also, poorly designed extension can reduce the value of a house if it spoils its character or takes up too much of the existing garden.

As a starting point for any alterations or extension the original appearance of the property should be considered and any changes designed to reflect the character and style of the original house and that of the local area.

Most houses however were not designed to incorporate extensions at a later date so careful thought is needed if the most appropriate design solution is to be achieved. Where possible, alterations or extensions should be confined to the rear or less prominent elevations.

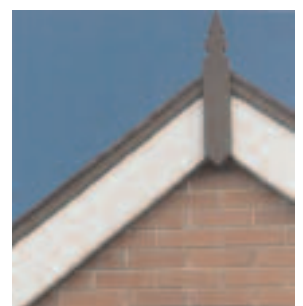
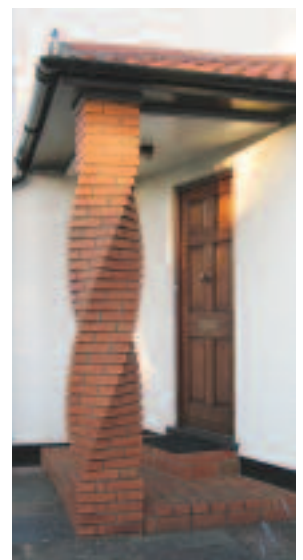
#### Take a Look at Your Surroundings

Bristol is made up of a number of neighbourhoods, many with a distinct character and identity. This is often reflected in the shape,

layout and architectural style of the buildings, the materials they are made of and the landscape in which they sit.

Any alterations or extension should generally respect but not necessarily mimic the style and appearance of the house, and the character of the locality, particularly in relation to:

- built form, scale and proportions;
- roof form and pitch;
- window and door shape, style and details;
- external materials;
- gardens and landscaping;
- boundary wall, gates and piers.



*The details and materials of a particular building add to its character and visual interest*

## 5.2 Inclusive Home Design

The potential for improving the accessibility of a property should be considered where alterations or an extension are proposed. Creating level access and providing a bathroom on the ground floor will, for example, help visitors such as the elderly, those with a disability and/or in a wheelchair. Also, recognising that needs may change in the future, consideration should also be given to designing flexibly so that with the minimum of adaptation such access and use can be incorporated.

The Building Regulations provides guidance on accessibility issues in Approved Document Part M - Access to and use of buildings. This is available at [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk). Further information and guidance can also be found in 'Designing Lifetime Homes', Joseph Rowntree Foundation (1997) ([www.lifetimehomes.org.uk](http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk)) and the guidance in 'Design Manual', Habinteg Housing Association (1992).

## 5.3 Sustainable Design and Construction

The City Council is committed to promoting sustainable development, minimising the adverse environmental impact of development and ensuring the prudent use of natural resources.

There are many things that can be done whilst planning to build an extension or carry out alterations to your home that will contribute to protecting the environment and lessening global warming, as well as improve energy efficiency.

The following sets out key elements to consider:

- Draught proofing of windows and doors;
- Double/triple glazed windows, with low 'E' (emissivity) glass, argon filled between panes;
- Highly efficient heating and lighting systems;

- The orientation of an extension and its potential for 'solar gain';
- High levels of thermal insulation in floors, walls and roofs;
- Renewable energy sources of environmentally friendly, abundant, building materials;
- Recycled materials;
- Permeable paving and use of soakaways;
- Rainwater collection, use of grey water recycling systems and/or water butts.

In addition to the above soft landscaping is also important. Trees and soft landscape such as shrubs and grass may be used to not only soften the visual impact of alterations and extensions, but also can help to improve air quality and reduce pollution.

It is also important to consider appropriate storage of the household wheelie bin and recycling box. These should ideally be screened from public view, behind a front boundary wall or landscaping, or within a rear garden etc.



*Wheelie bins and recycling boxes should only be put out onto the street on the day of collection. When being stored they should be screened from public view.*

CREATE - Bristol's Unique Environment Centre has, as a showcase project, built The Ecohome. This unique, purpose built dwelling has been constructed to demonstrate sustainable building design and lifestyles, and is full of ideas and information on eco-friendly construction and living.

The property is managed by Bristol City Council's CREATE Team and is open to the public daily:

Monday - Friday 12.00 noon - 3.00pm.  
To visit please contact the CREATE Centre,  
Smeaton Road, Bristol BS1 6XN

Tel: 0117 925 0505 or  
email: [create@bristol-city.gov.uk](mailto:create@bristol-city.gov.uk)



*Taking advantage of solar gain is an important design consideration*



In older properties where timber sash or casement windows are to be replaced, modern timber versions will usually be preferred to any other material for visual and sustainability reasons. It is rarely possible to achieve a good replica of older windows using uPVC. Not only can uPVC have an inferior appearance it is difficult to repair and can release harmful toxins into the air when manufactured and disposed of.

Changes to the external facing of a property, such as adding stone cladding or rendering brickwork, needs careful consideration as it can detrimentally effect the appearance of the property. It is generally not recommended.

## 5.4 Alterations

Even where planning consent is not required, alterations to your property should be in character with the style of your house and the neighbourhood in general. For example, when replacing windows you should consider the style, proportions and materials suitable for your house. Likewise, when repainting, re-rendering or re-pointing the exterior, you should respect the original appearance of the property and its relationship to neighbouring buildings.



*Inappropriate alterations may erode the character of a particular property and detract from the appearance of the street scene. Retain original features*



*Alterations to prominent roofs needs careful consideration*

Bristol has a hilly landscape making many properties, and especially their roofs, particularly visible. As the shape, pitch and materials of a roof are an important feature of many homes, alterations affecting them should ensure their character is retained. Pitched roofs are acceptable for most alterations, but they should be set lower than the top of the main roof to maintain its original character. Flat roofs may in certain circumstances be more appropriate and provide the opportunity for a 'living green roof'.

Elements such as chimneys stacks provide a functional and attractive feature to many houses and so should not be removed.

Many of Bristol's houses are of a simple, well-proportioned design but often contain original features unique to a particular street. Whatever the design or style of a property, where it forms part of a wider coherent street design it is important to ensure the original appearance is maintained.

## 5.5 Extensions

Successful extensions usually appear subservient to the original house. Over-large extensions can affect the visual quality of an area and the street scene, as well as unbalance the appearance of the existing building. To minimise the visual impact on the street, extensions should be located on the least prominent elevations and, ideally at the rear.

To retain the existing character and appearance of the property, the style, roof pitch, windows and building materials used on any extension should generally match or respect those of the existing building. High quality design alternatives may also be acceptable.

### Be a good neighbour

Care should be taken to ensure that your proposals do not result in a significant loss of sunlight, daylight or result in overshadowing of your neighbour's property. Furthermore, extensions should not be overbearing, or result in unacceptable overlooking or loss of privacy.



*An extension should be designed to minimise the effect on your neighbour's amenity*

It is advisable to discuss your proposals with your neighbours who may be affected so that you can address any concerns they may have before submitting a planning application. The council takes into account relevant planning objections from neighbours when assessing a planning application.

You will also need your neighbour's permission if you intend altering a party wall, if any building works encroaches or overhangs onto their property, or if access is required for construction, or future repair or maintenance.

Extensions should not result in any significant loss of privacy to neighbouring houses and gardens. The best way of ensuring privacy between houses is to avoid windows to habitable rooms directly facing one another. Where this cannot be achieved and habitable rooms face each other, as a 'rule of thumb', a gap of 21 metres should generally be provided. In more densely developed, inner urban locations this distance may be less. In exceptional cases, obscured glazing may be needed where potential overlooking problems cannot be overcome, or the window(s) set at an angle to avoid direct overlooking. Where windows to habitable rooms face the end wall of a house the distance should be not less than 12 metres.

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

### Loss of Daylight or Sunlight

Extensions should not cause any unreasonable loss of light or overshadowing to any existing habitable rooms of neighbouring properties, or to gardens, in particular, to the area immediately to the rear of the house.

Where extensions are proposed the City Council will seek to prevent excessive daylight loss from habitable rooms of neighbouring properties. In assessing proposals the City Council uses the



*An extension too close to a neighbour's property should not cause a detrimental loss of daylight or sunlight*

Building Research Establishments principles contained in *Site Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice*.

The likely impact of proposed extensions will normally be assessed by a planning officer on site, taking into account all relevant planning issues, including the site's general orientation and proximity of neighbouring properties.

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.

## Loss of amenity space

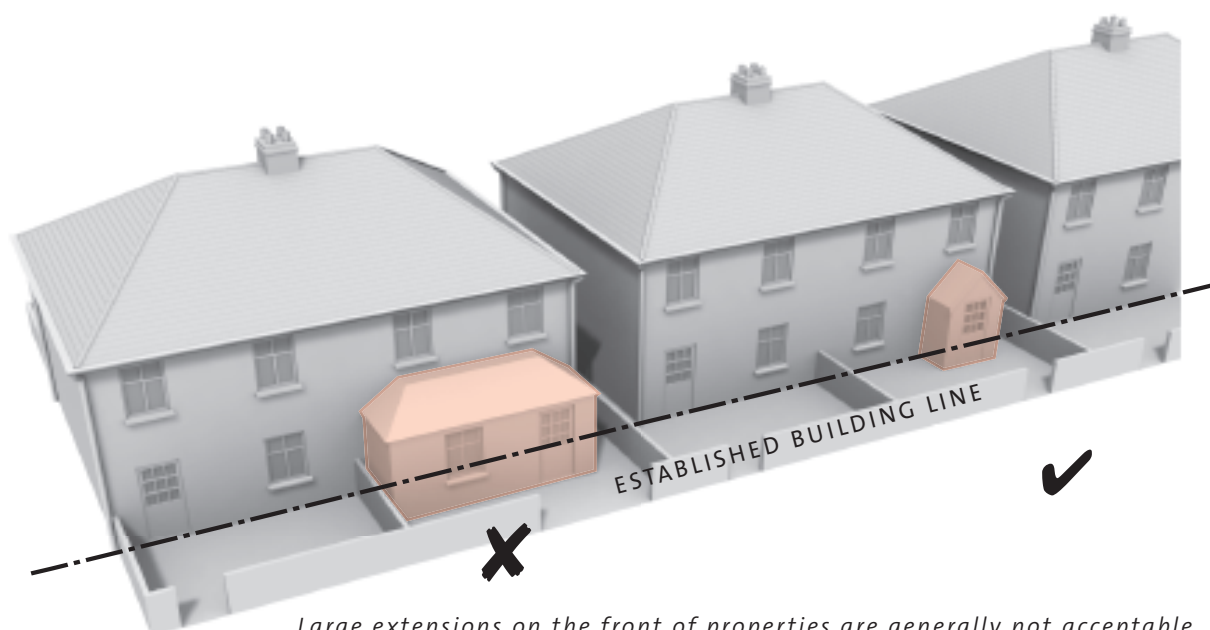
When an extension to a property is proposed, the City Council will take into account the potential loss of garden or private amenity space. Extensions should maintain a usable garden area to allow practical use and reflect the established character of the area and size of house. The loss of such space should be minimised, particularly as extensions frequently allow for an increase in the number of residents living at a property.

Many houses have a direct access from the front or side of the property to the rear other than by passing through a habitable room. Where alterations or an extension are proposed, any existing access should ideally be maintained.

## Front Extensions and Porches

The front elevations of houses are 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.

Small additions such as porches 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.



*Large extensions on the front of properties are generally not acceptable*

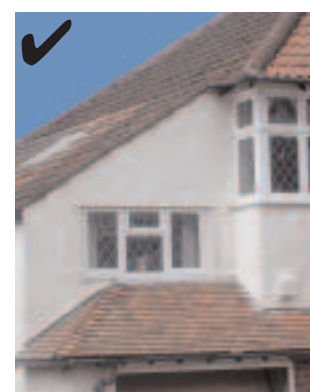
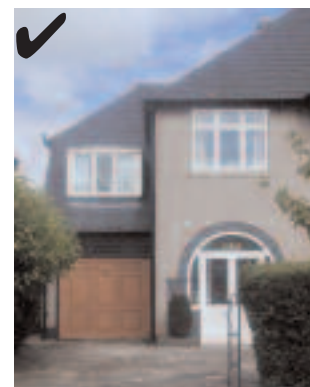
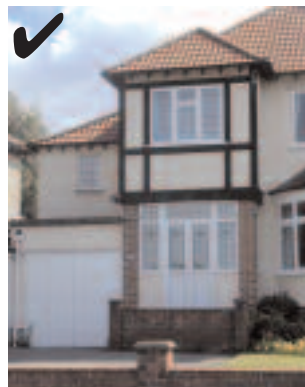
## Side Extensions

The success of a side extension will generally be determined by its relationship to the style, character and appearance of the existing property.

### *i. Semi-Detached Houses*

Side extensions to semi-detached houses should be subservient to the existing house to maintain the properties' architectural integrity, the balance of the pair and character of the street.

This can be achieved by setting back the extension from the front wall of the house, and stepping down the roof ridge height. As a guide, a minimum set back of 1 metre should be provided.



*Examples of successful side extensions*

An unsympathetic extension that has a poor relationship with the original house end which may lead to a 'terracing effect' along a street. This is **not** acceptable.



A conventional design solution which is subservient to the original house. The extension is set back from the front building line of the original house. The roof ridge height is also lower.



This solution illustrates a first floor extension over a pre-existing garage. In this case the new upper floor is designed to follow the 'subservient' principles.



An alternative to the above is the 'cat-slide' solution with its large slopping roof and dormer window. This perhaps has the strongest character although would provide less accommodation.



*Examples of good and bad side extensions*

## ii. Detached Houses

For detached dwellings there is greater flexibility to extend the property and in many cases, it is less important for an extension to be subservient to the main house. However, this is dependent on the particular property and the character of the area.



*An extended detached house reflecting the scale and character of the original*

## iii. End of Terraces

On end of terrace houses it is often more suitable to continue the terrace building line and roof ridge height so that the extension becomes part of the terrace.



*An extended terrace house*

## iv. Gaps between Buildings

The gaps between detached or semi-detached houses are an important characteristic and their infilling with side extensions can detract from the appearance of the neighbourhood. As a cramped, 'terracing effect' can result, for this reason, a side extension should ideally, where space is available, leave at least 1 metre between it and the adjoining boundary. This should be larger if the existing properties have wider spaces between them.



X



✓

*Side extensions should avoid creating terracing effect*

## v. Extensions at Corners

Particular attention needs to be paid to the design of both single and two storey extensions on corner plots. This is because they can encroach over the building line on either highway frontage, and therefore be particularly prominent in the street scene. Over-dominant solutions can sometimes create undesirable pinch points or enclosure at the entrance to a side road.

In the first instance, established buildings lines should be respected. Developments including side extensions on corner properties, which break such lines, will not normally be permitted where the proposal harms the appearance of the street scene or open nature of the area.

Sufficient space should also be retained at the side of the site to ensure that the open aspect of the corner is retained.

The following general guidelines apply:

- Established building lines on both the street frontage and side should be respected. The presence of existing substantial hedging or fencing, or substantial highway verges would be taken into account in assessing whether a relaxation to the above guidelines can be made. This is particularly relevant for single storey extensions.
- The extension should not interfere with the forward visibility of drivers at junctions.



*A cramped and enclosed feel can result if corner extensions occupy the entire space at the side of a property*



*Side extensions at corner locations should respect the established building lines and not encroach beyond them*

## Rear Extensions

Extensions are usually most successful at the rear of a property where they have the least visual impact on the neighbourhood and the character of the street. However, they still need to be carefully designed to avoid a loss of sunlight or daylight, and/or creating a detrimental sense of enclosure or oppressiveness to neighbouring properties.

You should consider the appearance and impact of your proposals from your neighbour's property, particularly where there are significant differences in ground level or in the orientation between properties. A large rear extension may also have an adverse effect on your own property by cutting off sunlight and/or daylight to existing rooms.

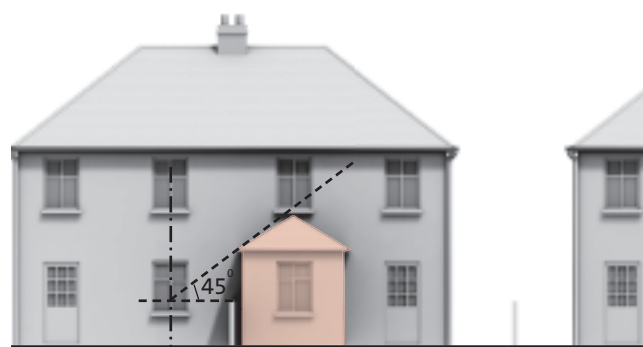
### Rear Extensions

In assessing proposals for rear extensions the City Council will use as a rule of thumb the '45° rule'. Extensions should be designed so as not to cross a 45° line (on plan and elevation) projected from an adjoining neighbour's nearest ground floor habitable room window which is perpendicular to the proposed extension.

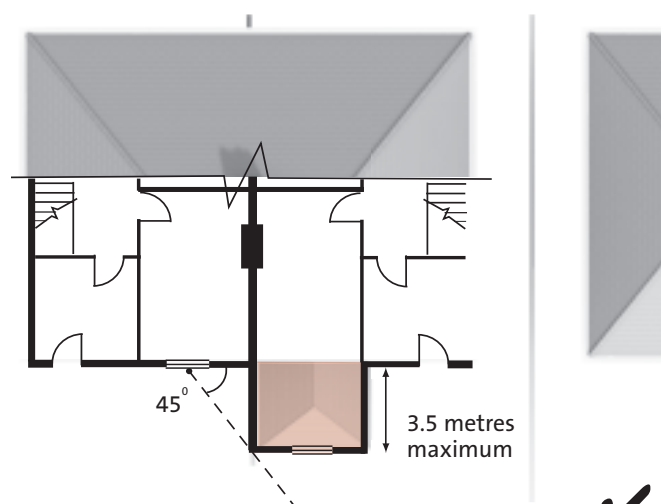
The reference point is the centre of the neighbour's window to the extension. If the extension has a pitched roof then the top of the extension can be taken as the height of its roof halfway along the slope.

The 45° rules of thumb seek to:

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



REAR ELEVATION



PART GROUND FLOOR PLAN

*A significant amount of light is likely to be blocked if the centre of the window on the existing building lies within the 45° line, or if the extension exceeds 3.5 metres in depth*

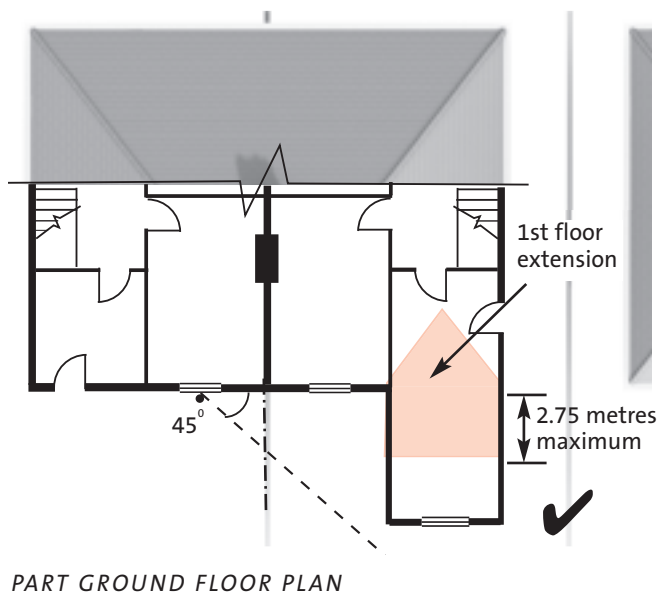
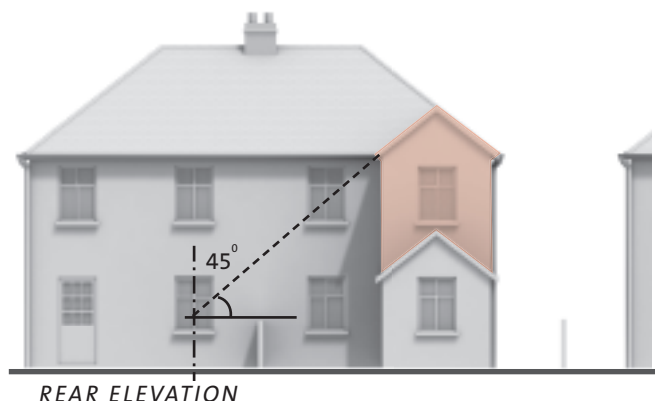
Experience has shown that single-storey rear extensions should be designed to a maximum depth of 3.5 metres but may need to be significantly less in the case of terraced houses.

Permanent structures between properties such as boundary walls, fences and hedges that affect the application of the approach may justify relaxation of the tests.

Two storey extensions can be problematic, and in any event are unlikely to be acceptable beyond 2.75 metres.

On narrow width terraced properties, two storey rear extensions are often not possible as they can result in unreasonable loss of daylight or outlook from adjoining houses, and/or a detrimental sense of enclosure or oppressiveness. Where such extensions are proposed the City Council will consider the above rule of thumb and the context of the area.

The City Council will generally accept extensions that meet the above criteria although may relax these standards in consideration of the type or size of property, its location within the city and the historic context.



*An acceptable first floor rear extension*

## 5.6 Alterations to Roofs

### Loft Conversions

With loft conversions, the accommodation should be lit by dormer windows or roof lights set within the slope of the roof. Some roofs may not be suitable for conversion as their pitch is too shallow. In such situations, getting enough headroom may result in an overly large addition to the roof, which may have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the property. These will not normally be acceptable to the City Council. Some types of roof construction are also difficult to alter. They may require substantial and costly building works before an acceptable solution can be achieved.



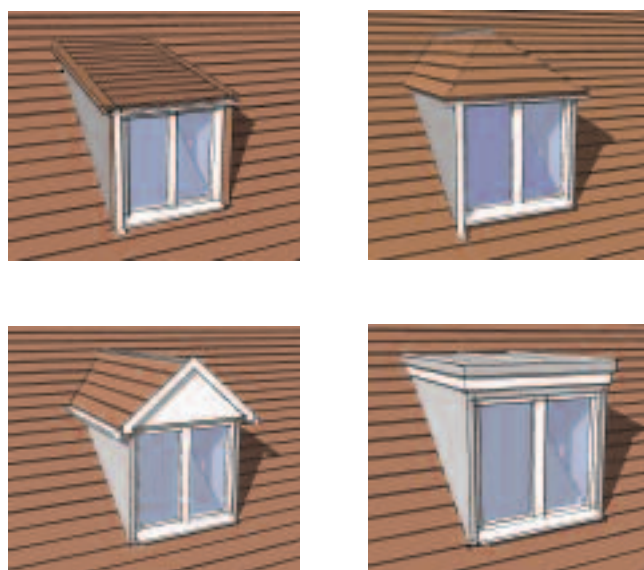
*Large box-like roof additions can unbalance the appearance of the property*

### Dormer Windows

There are many examples of inappropriate dormer window extensions that due to being too large in relation to the roof-slope have a or poor relationship to the original roof form. Too many dormer windows in a roof slope may also be harmful. Large, box-like dormers are inappropriate for the majority of domestic properties. To achieve a good design it is necessary to pay particular attention to the size and form of the roof, and the arrangement and proportion of existing windows.



*Examples of good dormer window design*



*Typical dormer window designs*

Traditional dormer windows obey recognised design rules of scale, proportions and window hierarchy. They are also subservient to the main roof by being set comfortably within the slope of the roof. In some cases however it may be appropriate to extend directly up from the exterior walls of the property.



*An example of subservient dormer windows in a semi-detached house*

The following are considered essential design characteristics of acceptable dormer windows and are illustrated above:

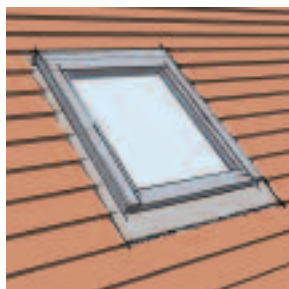
- They are located only on the side or rear roof pitches;
- They sit comfortably within the plane of the host building's roof;
- They appear subservient in form to the roof of the host building;
- The front elevation of dormers are restricted to the glazed area and necessary construction width for dormer cheeks;
- The siting, scale and proportions of window detailing reflects that of the host building;
- Materials generally reflect that of the host building.



*Examples of subservient dormer windows in a detached house*

## Rooflights

Rooflights are an acceptable way of allowing light into a loft space as they maintain the roof plane and have less than dormer windows visual impact.



Rooflights should not be of a size or number that will dominate the appearance of the roof slope. As such they should ideally be located on the side or rear of a property. 'Low profile' rooflights, which reduce projections above the roof finish are preferred as they have a reduced visual impact. Light pollution from rooflights should also be considered and where possible minimised.

## Chimneys

As well as their purpose as a vent for fireplaces or modern gas fires, chimney stacks and their pots can add character to a property and visual interest to the roofscape. Where they exist they should be retained when alterations are proposed and in some cases, where extensions are proposed, new ones included.

## 5.7 Balconies and Terraces



*Terraces added to two historic properties with a privacy screen erected on the boundary wall*

The addition of a balcony or terrace to a property above ground floor level can be particularly problematic and in most circumstances would not be acceptable. Not only may they allow direct overlooking into neighbouring properties or private gardens, they can also increase the general level of noise and disturbance. The impact may effect both those at the sides and opposite the balcony/terrace in question.



*Acceptable examples of rear terraces*

A privacy screen can sometimes be used to mitigate against any overlooking of neighbouring properties although this may not necessarily overcome the level of noise and disturbance. The impact of the screen in terms of its appearance or the sense of enclosure it may have also needs careful thought. A 'privacy' screen can sometimes be used to mitigate against any overlooking of neighbouring properties. The impact of the screen in terms of its appearance or the sense of enclosure it may have also needs careful thought.

## 5.8 Garages and Parking

As with extensions, the design of garages and garden buildings should generally respect the scale, character and materials of your property.

Ideally, garages at the side of a house should be set back from the main building line and a car space provided in front of the garage. Where a garage directly fronts a pavement or highway, the garage doors should open in a way that will not cause an obstruction to pedestrians or vehicles.

### Parking



*Curtilage parking screened behind boundary walls and entrance gates*



*An integral design solution for a porch and garage*



*Garages should be designed to respect the character of the house*



Where a hardstanding for car parking and associated pavement crossover are proposed, careful consideration should be given to their position as there may be a safety hazard with vehicles manoeuvring in and out and passing pedestrians and/or vehicles.

Where new entrances are proposed along a boundary these should retain as much original walling, fencing or railings as practical to ensure the appearance of enclosure is preserved. The construction of large open hard surfaced areas can have a significant and often detrimental visual impact on the setting to a house.

Where a hardstanding for car parking is proposed sufficient space for soft landscaping should be incorporated to screen cars and minimise the visual impact of the hard surfaced area. Planting can enhance residential areas and can have excellent screening value. Its loss may cause privacy problems as well as reduce the attractiveness of an area. Space for the storage of a wheelie bin should also be considered.

The material used for the hardstanding should allow the permeability of rainwater through to the subsoil rather than directly into storm drains. This is a more sustainable means of dealing with urban drainage.

For properties located within conservation areas, the City Council has further adopted design guidance with regard to how and when off-street parking may be achieved in the curtilage of residential dwellings. Further information can be found in PAN 6, *'Off-street Residential Parking in Conservation Areas'*.





## 6.0 ADVICE AND FURTHER INFORMATION

It is advisable to use a suitably qualified architect, or surveyor who is competent in producing drawings, good design and other supporting information should you wish to submit a planning application.

For copies of any of the guidance referred to in this document, please contact the Customer Services Team.

If you have a query of a general or factual nature (e.g. is planning permission required for a particular proposal?), you are welcome to visit the Planning Reception or telephone. If your enquiry requires an opinion to be expressed, e.g. the likelihood of permission being obtained, and particularly if you are a professional person acting on behalf of a client, please contact the City Council in writing enclosing information to illustrate the proposals. The contact details are:

Planning Services  
Planning, Transport & Sustainable Development  
Bristol City Council  
Brunel House  
St. Georges Road  
Bristol BS1 5UY

### Customer Services

Reception/General Enquiries:  
Tel: (0117) 922 3097

Minicom: (0117) 922 3854

Email:  
customerservices\_ptsd@bristol-city.gov.uk

### Opening hours:

Mon, Wed & Thurs: 8.30am-5.00pm

Tue: 9.30am-5.00pm

Fri: 8.30am-4.30pm

## 7.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## 8.0 GLOSSARY

### Amenity

The pleasant or normally satisfactory aspects of a location which contributes to its overall character and the enjoyment of residents or visitors. (definition from the Planning Portal glossary of planning terms).

### Building Line

A principal or flanking elevation of a building/group of buildings fronting a street.

### Catslide Roof

A wedge shaped dormer or outshoot roof which slopes in the same plane as the main roof.

### Curtilage

The land around a property, forming a contiguous unit with it (e.g. the garden around a house).

### Character

The combination of features of a building or an area, such as their spatial relationship, landscape and building uses etc, that give its distinctive identity.

### Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are "areas of special architectural or historic interest." Bristol has designated 33 Conservation Areas with the aim of preserving or enhancing their character or appearance. Descriptions and policies for the first 29 Conservation Areas are available in the Conservation Area Enhancement Statements documents published in 1993.

### Context

The setting of a site or area, including factors such as traffic, activities and land uses as well as landscape spaces and built form.

### Defensible Space

An area of semi-private space that is privately owned, surveyed, demarcated or maintained by somebody.

### Development Plan

A document (a Structure or Local plan) that sets out in writing and/or in maps and diagrams a local planning authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land and buildings in the authority's area (definition from the Planning Portal glossary of planning terms).

### Enclosure

Physical or sense of definition of space or area.

### Fenestration

The arrangement, size and proportion of windows in a building.

### Habitable rooms

These are considered to be the main rooms within a house and include the living room, dining room, kitchen and bedrooms. Hallways, bathrooms, circulation areas or landings are not however considered to be 'habitable' rooms.

### Listed Buildings

A building or structure identified by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport as being of special architectural or historic interest. There are three categories of listing: Grade I (the highest quality), Grade II\* and Grade II.

### Local Distinctiveness

The essential character of a locality.

### Local Plan

Statutory development plan prepared by a local planning authority setting out detailed policies for environmental protection and development (definition from the Planning Portal glossary of planning terms).



### **Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs)**

A series of documents setting out government policy and advice on planning issues such as housing and transport.

### **Policy Advice Note (PAN)**

The City Council has produced a series of Policy Advice Notes which aim to encourage high standards of development and environmental quality in Bristol and raise awareness about some of the design issues which the City Council consider priorities in development control. These notes provide supplementary planning guidance to in support of Local Plan policies.

### **Public Realm**

The parts of a town or city open and accessible for general public use including streets, squares and parks.

### **Ridgeline**

The apex of the roof continued along the length of the roof span.

### **Roofscape**

View resulting from a blend of roof pitches, sizes and heights within the built environment.

### **Roof pitch**

Angle at which rafters form an apex from the supporting walls.

### **Streetscape**

The overall effect of street facades and linked spaces.

### **Street Scene**

That which is visible from the public domain. The street scene is considered to constitute an area particularly sensitive to development proposals, requiring a high standard of design.

### **Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

Additional advice or guidance issued by a local planning authority, expanding on its statutory policies.

### **Sustainability**

The principle that the environment should be protected in such a condition and to such a degree that ensures new development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

### **Townscape**

The physical form and character of part of a built-up area.

### **Visual Amenity**

The value of a particular area or view in terms of what is seen.



