Neath and Port Talbot Residential Design Guidelines

Initial Assessment

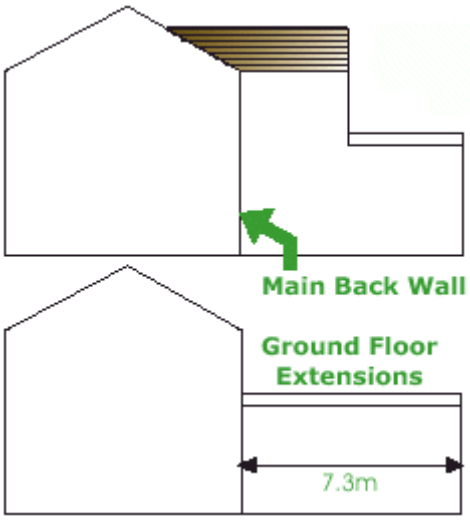
1. Before committing yourself to a particular design you should examine closely your house and its surroundings.
    a. Existing living space should be used to its best advantage, potentially enabling a smaller extension to be built or even avoiding the need for an extension.
    b. Note the character of your house, the materials used, the roof shape, the type and position of windows. Do the houses match or balance the adjacent dwelling(s)?
    c. Note the position of your neighbour's windows. How will any extension affect their outlook, sunlight or privacy? Are there mature trees or bushes which could be kept?
2. The above are all important influences upon the design of your extension, and if observed, will mean that any proposed extension will add to the appearance of your own property and the surrounding neighbourhood rather than detract from it.
3. It is strongly recommended that PROFESSIONAL ADVICE SHOULD BE OBTAINED when any extension is being considered. In addition AN INFORMAL MEETING AT AN EARLY STAGE WITH ONE OF THE COUNCIL'S PLANNING STAFF CAN ALSO SETTLE MANY BASIC DESIGN PROBLEMS and will save time at a later stage.

Rear Extensions to Terraced Properties

Extensions at Ground and First Floor

1. The following policy guidelines have been adopted by the County Borough Council:-
    a. REAR GROUND FLOOR EXTENSIONS to terraced properties will not normally be permitted to project more than 7.3 metres beyond the main back wall** of the dwelling.
    b. REAR FIRST FLOOR EXTENSIONS to terraced properties will not normally be permitted to project more than 3.6 metres beyond the main back wall** of the dwelling.

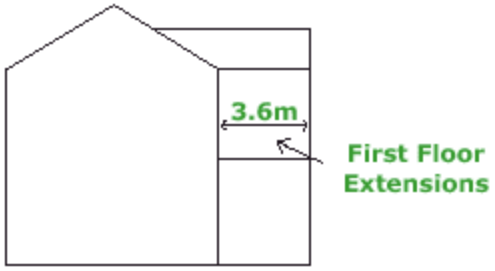
c. Where the properties on both sides of a dwelling already extend beyond that allowed by these guidelines, an extension may be allowed to the same length as that of the smaller of the neighbouring extensions.

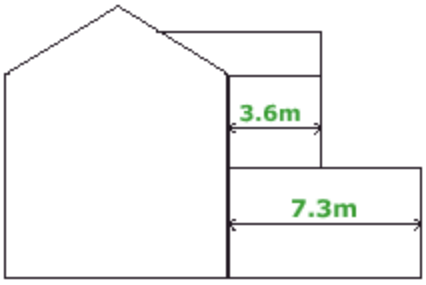


Definition of the Main Back Wall of a Terraced Property

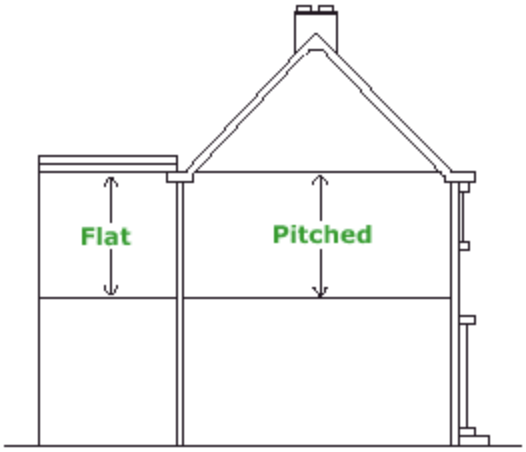
**The main back wall is, for this purpose, the back wall supporting the main pitched roof, and shall not include either an original rear wing or any other extension.

2. It is strongly recommended that all first floor extensions be provided with a pitched roof. Typically such a roof will cost approximately 10% more than a flat roof. However, a pitched roof extension has the advantage of low maintenance cost compared with a flat roof. It will have a much longer life and may even provide additional storage space. It will also significantly improve the appearance of the property. A well designed extension will also normally increase the value of the property. Pitched roofs will be required on all prominent end of terrace properties and those which are in a visually dominant position. Pitched roofs will also normally be required throughout Conservation Areas.





Combined First and Ground Floor Extensions



Flat Roof Placed Above Eaves Level

3. In normal circumstances space should be retained between a common boundary and the wall of any extension. Extensions immediately adjacent to a boundary may give rise to foundations or eaves and gutters encroaching upon or overhanging the adjoining property. If this situation cannot be avoided by changing the design, it will be necessary to serve a formal notice (Notice No.1,Certificate B) upon the owner of the affected property.

   Applicants attention is drawn to the Party Wall etc. Act 1996. An explanatory booklet is available from the DETR Tel No: 0870 122 6236.

4. Without formal confirmation that this has been done the County Borough Council will not be able to determine the application. This procedure does not remove the need to obtain consent from the neighbour to undertake work on, under or over his or her land. A solution to this potential problem would be to set back the extension from the boundary. The precise distance will depend upon the detailed design but will often be as little as 150mm.

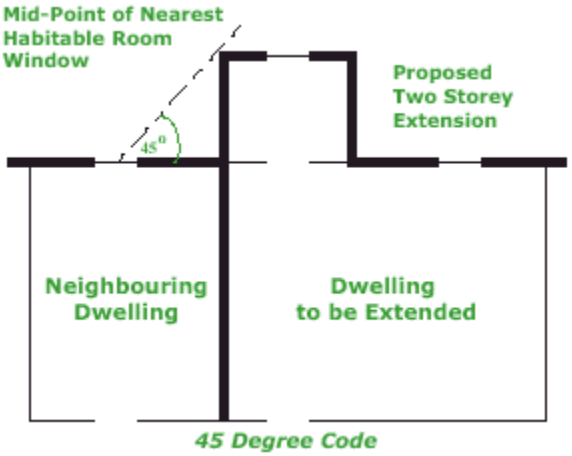
5. Where the original house has a pitched roof, any extension of the upper floor should also present a pitched roof appearance to the street. This should ideally be a full pitched roof complementary in shape to that of the existing house, although where the extension is not too prominent, a combination of a pitched and flat roof may be acceptable.

6. Only if it is not visible from the surrounding streets, or other public areas or it is technically not possible to design a suitable pitched roof, might a flat roofed extension be considered acceptable. This will usually apply to rear extensions only.

7. Special care is needed when dealing with the intersection of a flat and pitched roof because even the lowest heights for habitable rooms in a rear extension will result in a flat roof which is higher than the existing eaves level. However, a pitched roof extension would largely solve this and be more acceptable.

Rear Extensions to Detached and Semi-Detached Properties

Extensions at Ground and First Floor



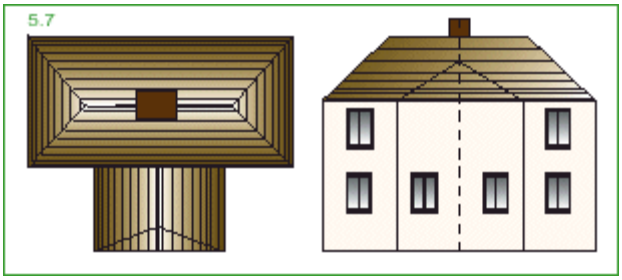
1. The following guidelines have been adopted by the County Borough Council:-
   THE 45 DEGREE-CODE (Non-Terraced Property)
2. To comply with the 45 degree code, First Floor extensions shall be designed so as not to cross the 45 degree line from an adjoining neighbour's nearest window which lights a habitable room or kitchen. The reference FIRST FLOOR EXTENSIONS

   The 45 degree line shall be drawn in the horizontal plane such that the windows to be considered are those at a similar height of the proposed extension. point is the mid-point of the window of the nearest habitable room for the extension.
3. Dependant upon the relative size and orientation of the windows involved the code may be relaxed if the extension would only affect a secondary window to a room which has two or more windows.
4. Development Rights

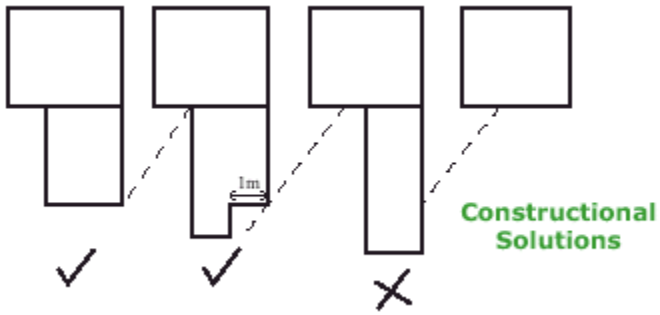
   Regard will also be had to any permitted development rights that may exist such that the County Borough Council will not seek to be overly restrictive should a similar extension be able to be built without planning consent.

5. If an extension has already been built or been given planning approval prior to the Council's adoption of the Code so that its projection is beyond that which would be permitted by the Code, an extension on the other half to a pair of semi-detached

properties should not extend further than one already built or permitted.



6. Joint proposals for extensions of a pair of semi-detached properties may be accepted even if the individual extension would not comply with the code, providing that they are the same depth and are to be constructed and completed at the same time. Regard must nevertheless be had to any other neighbour that might be affected.
7. The detailed design of a proposed extension may be unacceptable even though it may comply with the code, for example, by choice of a particular roof type. Therefore, the height of a proposed extension, it's means of construction and the materials to be used are important matters to be taken into account.
8. Proposals for ground floor extensions will be treated on their merits, taking account of the height and length of the proposal and its position in relation to neighbouring properties, in particular any habitable room windows.



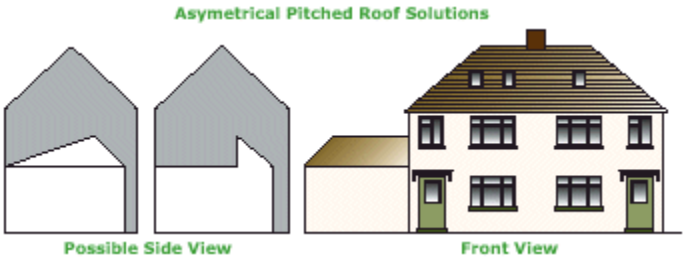
9. Certain constructional solutions which satisfy the Code may be unsatisfactory because they leave awkward and unusable spaces between a proposed extension and the boundary. Angled walls are normally only acceptable when they form an essential part of the overall design. Any "set backs " should leave at least 1 metre

between the proposed extension and the boundary in order to allow future access and maintenance.

10. Permanent structures between properties such as boundary walls, over 2 metres in height and brick built outhouses which affect the application of the Code may justify its relaxation. Temporary structures, however, will not be taken into account. (Temporary here refers to means of enclosure or buildings constructed of non-permanent materials.

11. Where there is a change in levels between two dwellings, an extension to the higher of the two would have a greater effect on its lower neighbour than the higher neighbour. In such circumstances, the height of the extension in relation to its neighbour will be an important consideration.

12. If the house is semi-detached, it is important to keep the extension in scale and in balance with the whole of the original building. This can be achieved by avoiding large dominant extensions and by careful siting. Setting back the extension from the front wall of the house can also help the original building maintain its symmetry. (See Section 7.2).



13. In certain cases the use of a pitched roof will be considered essential and as outlined earlier it has considerable advantages over a flat roof. Where a pitched roof is used its shape should

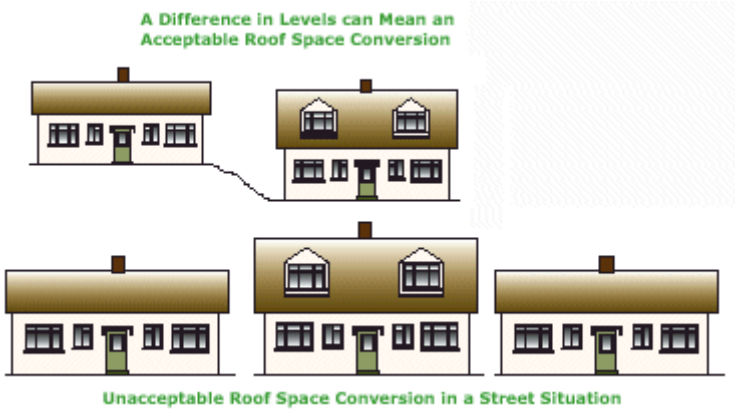
complement that of the existing house.

Even if a full pitched roof cannot be designed or afforded, a simple solution can be a small asymmetrical pitched roof. This may only require a small pitch on the prominent elevation. The result will be to make the extension appear to have a full pitched roof.

Bungalows

1. Bungalows often present particular problems when designing acceptable extensions. Whereas a single storey flat roofed extension may, in certain circumstances, be acceptable on a two storey house it would rarely be on a bungalow. In considering extensions to bungalow, therefore, regard should be had to extending the roof in a style to either match or to complement the existing.
2. An alternative approach is to consider converting the roof space. The practicality of this approach depends in part upon the form of construction. Appropriate technical advice should be sought before work's commence.
3. Levels

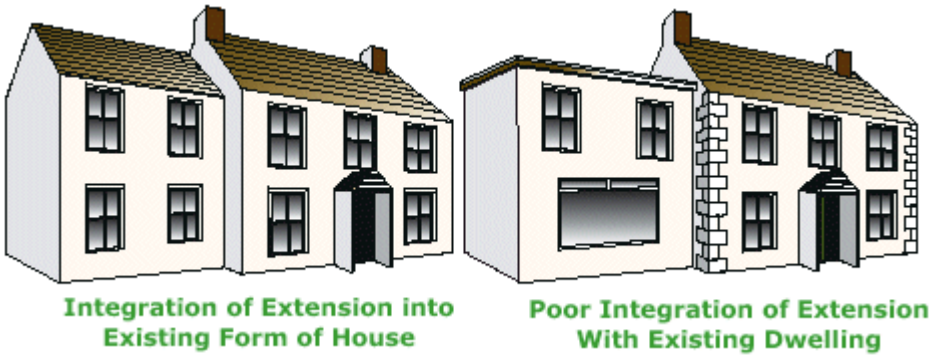
Where there is inadequate headroom within the existing roof space then raising the roof might be considered. This would often have an adverse impact upon a row or group of bungalows such that it would only normally be considered in respect of isolated properties or those where a significant difference in levels would largely disguise any visual impact.



Extensions other than to the Rear of Property

1. It is very important that any extension should be compatible with the design of the original building. The form or shape of the original house should indicate the type of extension which will be appropriate, paying careful attention to roof shape, size and general proportions. A large box-like construction at the side of a pitched roof house, for example, will normally be unacceptable.
2. Where the original house is semi-detached it is important that any two storey extension should not upset the balanced appearance of the whole building. Semi-detached properties are designed and built as a matching pair and typically have the same detailing and type of materials.
3. Balance

   It is therefore very important to ensure that a new extension does not destroy the symmetrical, balanced design of the original houses. The easiest way to protect the symmetry is to "step" any extension back from the front elevation by at least 1 metres.



4. Where general proportions would not be upset, or if the house is detached, the extension could be integrated into the original design of the house in such a way that it does not appear to be an obvious addition. This would normally require matching the design of the original house in all respects. In some cases however, and often, where the house is detached, it may be possible to use the extension to completely change the overall form of the house.
5. Some dwellings have a character and charm which can be destroyed by an excessively large or unsympathetic extension. To retain the contribution that such buildings make to the environment, extensions should be kept to an absolute minimum.

   In open countryside, in particular the original gross floor area of dwelling should not as a rough guide be more than doubled. In addition, if the original ceiling levels are low, the extension should be carefully designed to avoid having an overbearing

impact upon the existing house.

Changing The Form of a House

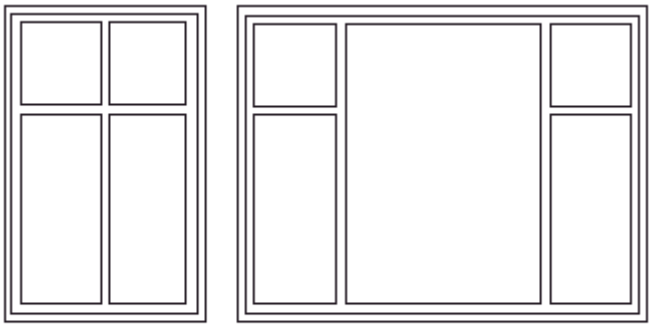
6. In normal circumstances it is often desirable to maintain a distance of 1 metre between a common boundary and the wall of any two-storey extension at the side for ease of maintenance and for rear access. If any extension has to be built close to a common boundary then care should be taken to avoid terracing. A wide extension that significantly reduces the distance between the blocks of "semi's " or detached dwellings can lead to an undesirable "terracing" effect. This can normally be overcome by setting back the extension from the front wall of the house. (As a general guide a set back of at least 1.5 metres is considered to be appropriate).
7. Where the original house has a pitched roof, any extension of the upper floor should also present a pitched roof appearance to the street and to any other public areas. This should, ideally, be complementary in shape to that of the existing house, although where the extension is not too prominent a combination of a pitched and flat roof may be acceptable.

Windows

Good Integration of Windows into the Design of an Extension

Poor Integration of Windows into the Design of an Extension

1. When matching old and new windows careful attention should be paid to:-
    a. Window sizes which should either be the same or complementary.
    b. Internal divisions should be of similar proportions and give the same horizontal or vertical emphasis;
    c. Materials should be similar to those of the existing windows.
    d. New windows should "line up" with the existing windows. the head heights and, where appropriate, the sill heights of existing and proposed windows should be the same. Similarly windows should, when located one above the other, should be vertically aligned.



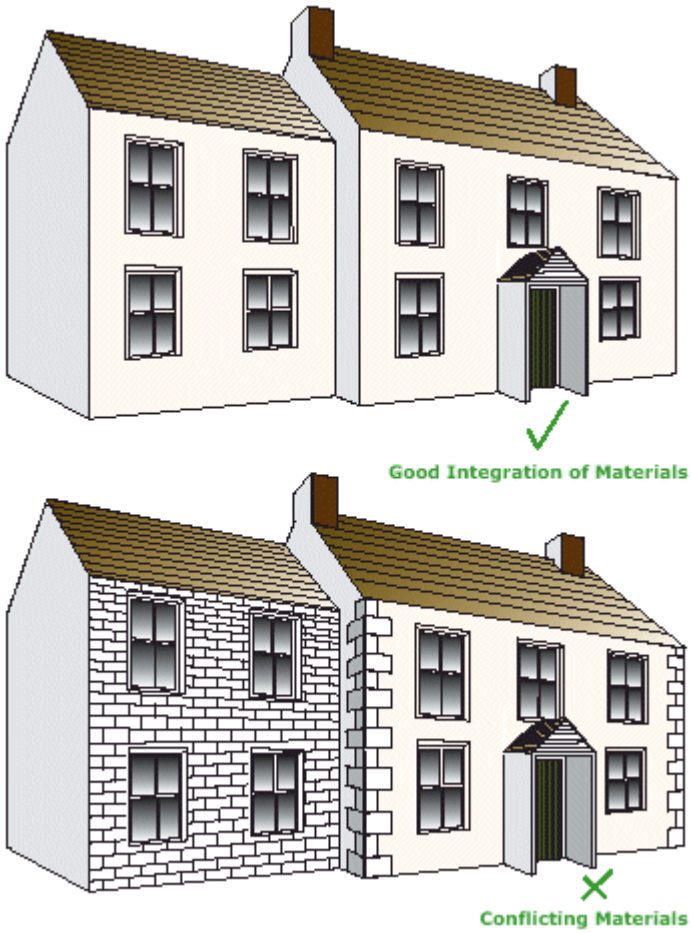
Vertical Emphasis Horizontal Emphasis

e. The style of windows should normally be retained between the existing dwelling and the proposed extension

2. In many cases standard "off the peg" windows will not be suitable for older properties in which case purpose made windows should be sought. Existing window openings should not normally be modified to accept standard units.

Materials

1. Wherever possible the materials used on the extension should match, or complement those of the existing building. A mixture of too many materials, or the introduction of alien materials, make the extension appear unrelated and thus out of place.
2. If an extension involves the continuation of an existing wall in the same plane then there should be maximum compatibility between old and new in terms of colour and texture of materials



Dormers

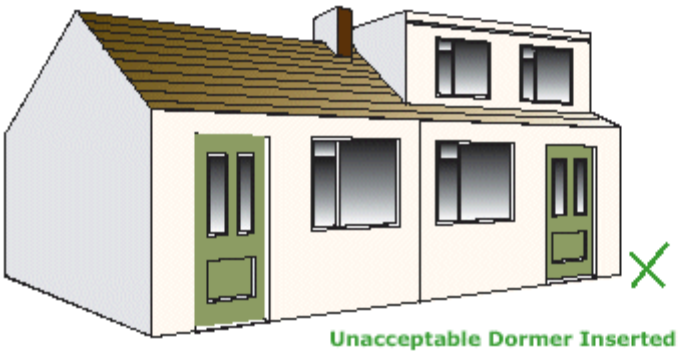
1. Generally a high ridge can accommodate a modest sized dormer room. Problems can arise, however, when the design and/or layout of the existing house is unsuitable because of the angle of the ridge or because it would overlook habitable rooms in a neighbouring property. In such cases an alternative form of extension should be considered. On the front elevations of properties particular care is needed to ensure that any dormer window or dormer extension does not effect the street picture. On semi-detached and terraced properties it is unlikely that dormers would be acceptable.

The Use of Velux Type Roof Lights to Enable
The Utilisation of Roof Space

Unacceptable Dormers in The Roofs
of Semi detatched Dwellings

2. Dormer windows in roofs should complement the existing features of the dwelling in terms of its proportions, size and positioning. Generally dormers should be constructed in materials to match the existing dwelling. Dormers too high in the roof, which would cause the loss of the ridge line when viewed from the street, or the creation of very long dormers, particularly on terraced or semi-detached properties should be avoided.

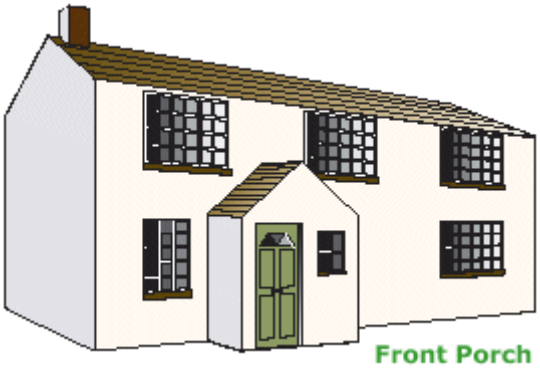
3. Where extra headroom is not required roof lights offer a simple, economical method of lighting the roof space. They are best kept as small as possible so as not to dominate the roof space.



Unacceptable Dormer Inserted in Roof Space
Bungalow Above The Existing Ridge Height

Porches

1. Porches, like other extensions, should reflect the character of the existing building. It is important that any porch is kept in scale with the original house, in terms of size and general proportions, in order that it should not appear too dominant. Generally, porches should be constructed in materials to match the existing dwelling.



Front Porch

Front Extensions

1. Large scale extensions to the front of properties are generally not acceptable to the Local Planning Authority. However, in

certain circumstances an extension to the front of a property can be acceptable, such applications will be treated on their merits but extensions are generally not acceptable if:

i. they would detract unduly from the street scene.
ii. they would detract from the overall appearance of the building.
iii. they would detract from the amenities of adjoining properties.
iv. they would be detrimental to highway safety.

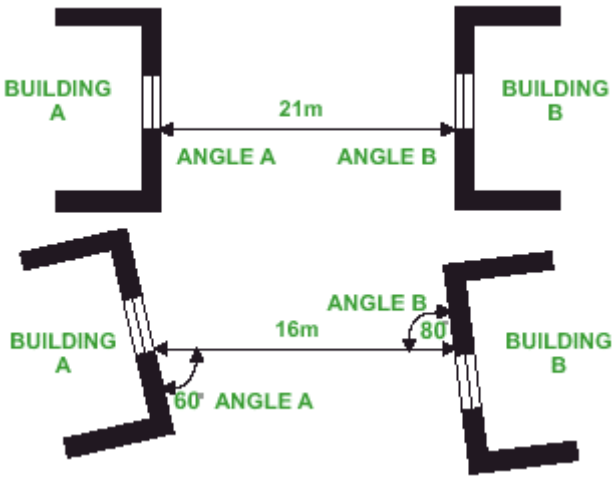
The following will also be taken into account when considering these:-

5. A minimum distance of 21.0 metres should be retained between overlooking habitable windows on that of the new extension and those in existing properties (see below).
6. No part of the extension should come within 2 metres of any highway.
7. Care should be taken with the design of the extension to avoid detracting from the overall appearance of the building. This is of particular importance in the case of semi-detached of terraced properties, where one house is part of an architectural unit.

Distances between Windows (of Habitable Rooms)

This does NOT APPLY to high level windows if they have a maximum cill height of 1.5m above room floor level. Exceptions to this policy will only be made where they can be shown to be justified by the particular circumstances.

FOR A GIVEN ANGLE BETWEEN THE HABITABLE ROOM WINDOWS OF BUILDINGS A AND B THE TABLE SHOWS THE MINIMUM DISTANCE IN METRES REQUIRED BETWEEN THE WINDOWS. DISTANCES AND ANGLES IN BETWEEN THOSE SHOWN IN THE TABLE SHALL BE IN PROPORTION TO ONE ANOTHER.



Method

Draw the shortest line between two habitable room windows.
Determine Angle A and B.
Using Angles A and B and the table overleaf the minimum distance permitted between the two windows can be found. e.g. A = 60 B = 80 min. distance = 16m