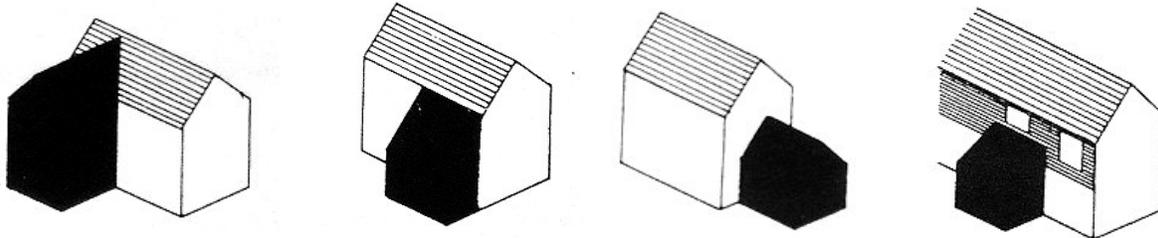


House extensions

House extensions are a popular way of providing extra space for homeowners whose accommodation needs have changed without them having to move house. Adding to the property is also one of the better ways to help it accrue value, as the extra space could contribute to a higher valuation when the time comes to sell.

House extensions can have a substantial impact on the appearance both of neighbouring houses and the street as a whole, depending on how well they're implemented. A successful extension is one that increases space and amenity with the minimum impact on the surrounding vicinity, especially neighbouring properties.

Many extensions, however, are poorly designed. While they achieve the required increase in space, their negative visual impact is detrimental to the appearance of the street and potentially diminishes any increase in property value. Design is therefore of the utmost importance, because improving the standard of extensions benefits everyone. The purpose of this advice note is to provide some ideas about how best to proceed – and how pitfalls can be avoided.



Some illustrative examples of different kinds of home extension

Three kinds of extension

There are three types of extension.

- 1. Extensions that matching the existing house.** An extension that appears as if it's an integral part of the house's original design. This is the approach adopted by the vast majority of homeowners in Portsmouth, who try and retain the character of the existing building with the design of the extension.
- 2. Extensions that contrast with the existing house.** An extension in the form of a radical, contemporary, architect-designed annexe to the rear, often on more than one floor.
- 3. Conservatories.**

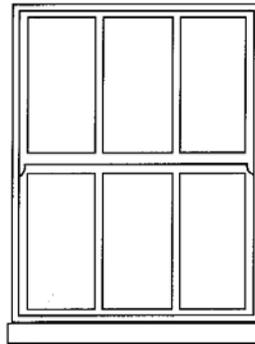
1. Extensions that match the existing house

Refer to the style and materials of the existing house

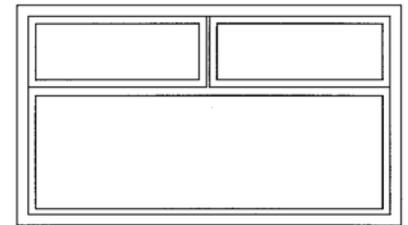
Most homeowners will want an extension that reflects the form, style and character of the existing building, to create a unified overall appearance. In general terms, the facing materials and features should correspond with those on the recipient house, and close attention should be paid to the extension's size and position, its roof, the style of windows and doors, and architectural details such as quoins and plinths. In order to optimise compatibility between the extension and the existing house, it may be worth employing an architect or architectural technician to design the extension.

Windows

The extension's new windows should match the original house's windows in proportion and style. The existing windows will have either a vertical or horizontal emphasis, which should be continued with the new windows, with similar glazing bars and opening sections. The easiest way to spoil your extension would be to install 'landscape' windows when the rest of the house's windows are 'portrait.' New windows should line up with the existing windows, and where windows are located one above the other, should be vertically aligned.



Window with horizontal emphasis ('landscape' shape) ▼



▲ Window with vertical emphasis ('portrait' shape)

Roofs: pitched or flat?

Single-storey extensions predominantly have flat roofs, but to help these harmonise with the existing building, the roof should relate to existing horizontal elements, such as canopies, or to the line of change between materials, e.g. brick to render or tile hanging.

Double-storey extensions should be designed with a full pitched roof, complementary to that of the existing house, as a flat roof will result in an excessively 'boxy' appearance. A pitched roof is usually a little more expensive than a flat roof, but offers a number of advantages, such as extra storage space and lower maintenance costs. However, in the event that the existing house has a flat roof, then a pitched roof on the extension would result in an undesirable visual clash.

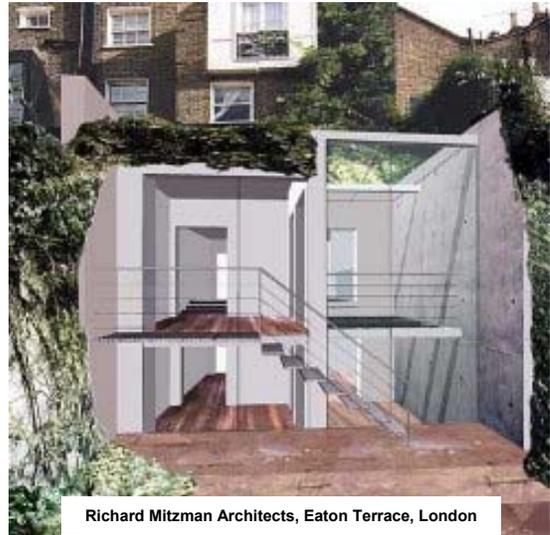
Size and position considerations

Side extensions shouldn't have a detrimental effect on the balanced symmetry of the original house or the overall street scene, and should therefore be set back from the front elevation. It should be integrated into the original design of the house in such a way that it seems subordinate to the main house and not visually obtrusive, although with a fully detached house it may be possible to design an extension that successfully changes the overall form of the house.

Double-storey extensions can have an even more pronounced effect on adjoining properties and the character of the street. With semi-detached or detached houses, an appropriate gap should be maintained between the extension and the curtilage boundary, to prevent a terracing effect.

2. Extensions that contrast with the existing house

Sometimes, however, contrast can be an inspired solution. In London, some homeowners have made their extensions elegant architectural statements, using good modern design that effectively off-sets a property's historic features. These kinds of architect-designed extensions usually incorporate fairly radical internal reconfiguring, and are only possible to execute at great expense. While demand for this kind of solution is less prevalent outside the capital, similar proposals would not be discouraged by the Council, provided it is implemented skilfully and with no adverse effect on your neighbours' amenity.



3. Conservatories

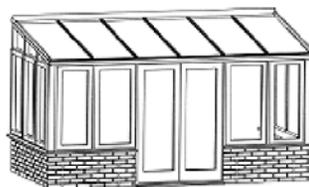


Most conservatory companies offer a variety of models based on periods of architecture, such as Victorian, Edwardian, Georgian, etc. Matching the style of conservatory to the period in which your home was built is a logical way to proceed, although it should be borne in mind that the lighter and simpler the design, the better - both in terms of external appearance and internal amenity. Highly-ornamented conservatories are often sought both by owners of traditional houses who want a design they think matches their house, and by some who live in more modern houses and hope that the conservatory will add the traditional gravitas that they may think their house lacks. However, conservatories shouldn't look more ornamented than the houses to which they're attached; instead, conservatories should be subservient in both style and size, and shouldn't dwarf the recipient house.

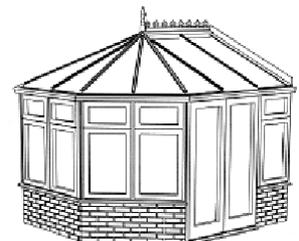
If choosing a UPVC conservatory, make sure the width of the sections that support the glazing is as narrow as possible, to avoid an undesirable heavyweight appearance and to minimise the dominance of plastic. The plinth of the conservatory should match the materials on the main house. And conservatories should always be a light colour, preferably white.



'Edwardian'



'Modern'



'Victorian'

Consider the neighbouring property at every stage of the design

It is vital to minimise the physical impact that any extension to your house will have on neighbouring properties. There are three main considerations involved, and these will constitute the most important factors in determining planning applications for extensions to dwellings. The house extension should...

- ...be an appropriate size, and not excessively large and overbearing
- ...not cause an unacceptable loss of daylight or sunlight to the neighbouring property
- ...not cause an unacceptable loss of privacy to the neighbouring property; windows should be carefully positioned to avoid overlooking.

First floor and two-storey extensions are much more likely to have an adverse effect on neighbouring properties. But wherever the extension may be located and whatever size is being considered, it is best to let your neighbours know of your plans at the first possible opportunity. The courtesy of discussing your proposals with neighbours at an early stage in the process may avoid objections later on, especially where a first floor extension is proposed.

Examples of practice



- ✓ *Using side extensions as an example, the pictures above illustrate two different approaches to house extensions. On the left, it's clear that some attempt has been made to ensure the extension is a discreet and harmonious addition to the main house...*



- ✗ *...while on the right, the extension is an addition which lacks sensitivity and makes little reference to the main building, making it a conspicuous feature of the street scene.*

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For translated information, please call:
Bengali answerphone service: **023 9284 1651**
Cantonese answerphone service: **023 9284 1652**

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