

A Design Guide

Advice to householders and developers who are considering small house extensions.

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1.0 Purpose Of The Guidelines

1.1 The guidelines are aimed at providing advice to householders and developers who are considering small house extensions, by setting out clearly and simply the criteria against which the planning applications will be considered. This will ensure a consistent approach to all such schemes submitted to the Local Planning Authority, particularly in respect to distance between habitable room windows.

1.2 In many of the older housing areas of the City standards of light and outlook at the rear of properties area already severely limited by the height and extent of existing rear extensions, and by their nearness to one another. This affects not only the living and bedroom windows in the rear wall of the house but also the kitchen and bedroom windows in the side wall of the wings.

1.3 The main purpose of these guidelines is to set out the acceptable standards for rear extension. They seek to protect the amenities of adjoining properties so that rear windows to rooms, particularly at ground floor level, would not be unacceptably affected by overshadowing with a resultant loss of daylight and outlook.

1.4 In every case each proposal will be considered in relation to the guidelines. Exceptions to them will only be made where it can be demonstrated that they are justified by the particular circumstances. Conversely, there may be instances where the situation on site dictates that extensions that comply with the guidelines are nevertheless unacceptable due to their impact.

1.5 It must be borne in mind by all householders that any house has a reasonable extendible limit. Beyond that point any further extension would represent an unacceptable over-development of the site.

2.0 Procedures and Preparations. Is Permission Necessary?

2.1 Extensions to residential properties may not require planning permission, depending upon their size and situation. The law relating to extensions is contained in the Town and Country Planning Acts and the Town and Country Planning General Development Order. However, as the legislation is subject to revision from time to time, prospective applicants are advised to contact the Planning Section of the Development Department to seek advice upon the extent of controls applicable at the present time. The Department has a further document available entitled "Your Planning Application" which is available free of charge from the Development Department, The Guildhall.

2.2 In addition, most building work, apart from straightforward repairs, will require Building Regulations approval for which separate application to the Environment and Health Department must be made. The Building Regulations are concerned with standards of construction and aspects affecting health and safety which are not covered by this Guide.

2.3 Additional controls are also applicable for properties in Conservation Areas, Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and for Listed Buildings.

3.0 Initial Assessment

3.1 Before committing yourself to a design you need to look around you at your house and its surroundings and explore all the possibilities:-

- a) Check that you are using your existing space to the best advantage. Careful internal replanning may resolve your space problems or enable a smaller extension to be built.
- b) Note the character of your existing house. Materials used, the roof shape, the proportion and position of doors and windows. What type of house is it? Does it match or "balance" the adjacent or nearby houses?
- c) Note the surroundings of your house. The space and character of the street scene, proximity of neighbours' windows. How will an extension affect your neighbours' outlook, sunlight, or privacy? Are there mature trees or bushes which could be kept?

3.2 These are all important influences on the design of your extension. If observed, they will help to ensure that your extension will add to the appearance and enjoyment of your neighbourhood rather than detract from it.

3.3 It is strongly recommended that professional advice should be obtained for any proposals to alter or extend a property. An informal meeting at an early stage with one of the Council's planning staff can also help settle many basic design problems and will save you time later on.

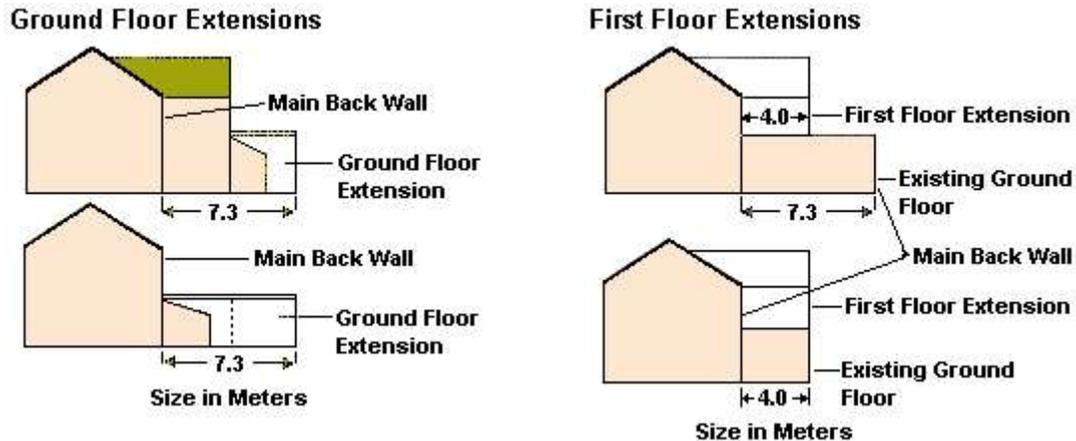
4.0 Rear Extensions To Terraced Properties

4.1 The following guidelines have been adopted by the Council:-

- a) REAR GROUND FLOOR EXTENSIONS to terraced properties will not be permitted to project more than 7.3 metres (24 feet) beyond the main back wall * of the dwelling.
- b) REAR FIRST FLOOR EXTENSIONS to terraced properties will not be permitted to project more than 4.0 metres (13 feet) beyond the main back wall * of the dwelling.
- c) Where the properties on both sides of a dwelling already have been extended beyond

that allowed by these guidelines, an extension may be allowed to the same length as that of the smaller of the neighbouring extensions.

* The main back wall is, for this purpose, the back wall supporting the main pitched roof, and shall not include the wing or any other extensions.



4.2 The Authority consider that the applications falling within the scope of these guidelines shall comply with the following criteria unless there are overriding site factors or personal circumstances:-

- a) Each dwelling shall retain the exclusive use of a minimum of 25 square metres of private open space, adjacent to that dwelling and behind the building.
- b) The distance between rear extensions in two opposite terraces shall be a minimum of 13 metres (40 feet).
- c) The distance from the extension to the rear fence shall not be less than 6.5 metres (20 feet).

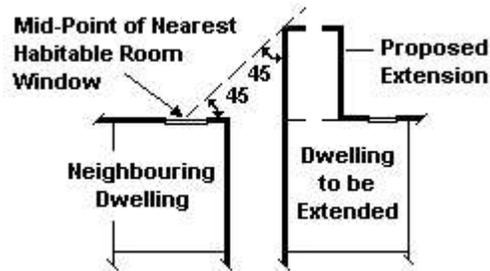
4.3 It is strongly recommended that all first floor extensions be provided with a pitched roof. On average such a roof will cost approximately 10% more than a flat room. However, a pitched roof extension has the advantage of low maintenance cost compared with a flat room and it will have a much longer life and will provide additional storage space. It will also significantly improve the appearance of the property and a well designed extensions will inevitably 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 normally be required in Conservation Areas.

4.4 Dormer extensions will not normally be allowed on the front elevation to terraced properties. For further guidance on the policy on dormer extensions please refer to Section 8.3.

5.0 The 45 Degree Code (Non Terraced Property)

5.1 To comply with the 45° code, extensions shall be designed so as not to cross the appropriate 45° line from an adjoining neighbour's nearest window which lights a habitable room or kitchen. The reference point is the mid-point of the window of the nearest habitable room to the extension. It is therefore important to bear in mind that

while a single storey extension may comply with the code, the addition of a second storey at a later date may conflict with it.

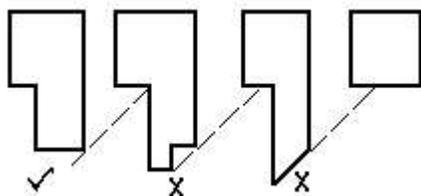


5.2 If an extension has already been built or been given planning approval prior to the Council's adoption of the Code so that its projection is beyond that which would be permitted by the Code, an extension on the other half of a pair of semi-detached properties should not extend further than the one already built or permitted.

5.3 Joint proposals by the Code, an extension on the other half of a pair of semi-detached properties may be acceptable 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.

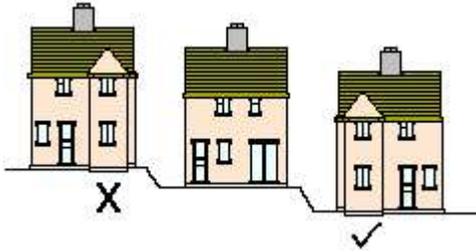
5.4 The detailed design of a proposed extension may be unacceptable even though it may comply with the Code. For example, by choice of a particular roof type. Therefore, the height of a proposed extension, its mode of construction and the materials to be used are important matters to be taken into account.

5.5 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.



5.6 Permanent structures between properties such as boundary walls, hedges 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).

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



6.0 Single Storey Extensions

6.1 In most cases a well designed single storey extension added to the side or rear of a detached or semi-detached house will present few problems if the 45 degree code is observed.

6.2 If the house is semi detached or terraced, 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 extensions from the front wall of the house can also help the original building maintain its symmetry.

6.3 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.

6.4 In the case of bungalows it is most important that any extension should closely relate in form and materials to the original building. A suitable pitched roof compatible with the existing roof would, therefore normally be essential.



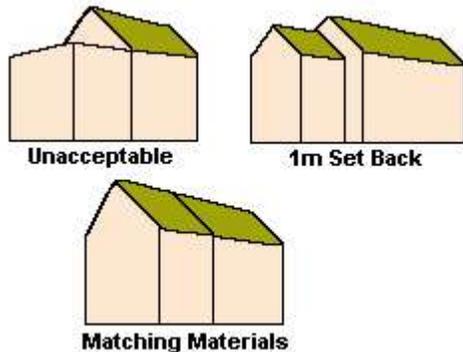
6.5 Buildings adjacent to a boundary may give rise to foundations or roof lines encroaching upon the adjoining property. If the situation cannot be avoided by changing the design, it will be necessary to serve a notice upon the owner of the affected property. This will enable the Planning Authority to determine the application. However, this would not remove the necessity of obtaining legal authority from the neighbour to undertake the work. A solution to this would be to set back the extension by 1 metre as outlined in Section 5.5.

7.0 Two Storey Extensions

7.1 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 appear uncomfortable and be unacceptable.

7.2 Where the original house is *semi-detached* it is important that any two storey extension should not upset the balanced, uniform appearance of the whole building. In the case of an extension at the side, this is usually best achieved by setting back the extension a minimum of 1 metre from the front wall of the house.



7.3 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 require matching the design of the original house in all respects. In some cases, where the house is detached, it may be possible to use the extension to completely change the overall form of the house.

7.4 In normal circumstances a distance of 1 metre should be achieved between a common boundary and the wall of any two-storey extension at the side. If an extension has to be built close to a common boundary then care should be taken to avoid terracing – a situation where a series of extension would connect separate houses into a continuous terrace without any visual break. This can normally be overcome by sufficiently setting back from the front wall of the house (as a general guide a set back of at least 2 metres is considered appropriate).

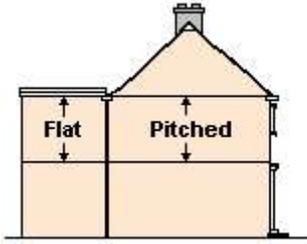
7.5 Development at the rear of most houses will generally be less critical in terms of appearance and more acceptable as part of the street scene, providing it is in scale with the building and the area. However, the 45° Code requirements could restrict potential for development at the rear of some houses, particularly if semi-detached.

7.6 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.

7.7 Only if it is not visible from the street, or it is not junction of a flat and pitched roof as the lowest permissible height of a habitable room will usually generate a flat roof which is higher than the existing eaves level. However, a pitched roof will overcome this problem by having a tapered ceiling and will therefore be more visually acceptable.

7.8 Special care is needed when dealing with the junction of a flat and pitched roof as the lowest permissible height of a habitable room will usually generate a flat roof which is

higher than the existing eaves level. However, a pitched roof will overcome this problem by having a tapered ceiling and will therefore be more visually acceptable.

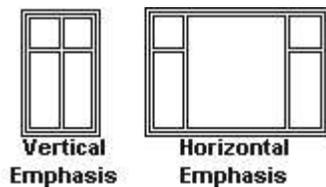


8.0 Detailed Design

8.1 Windows

When matching old and new windows careful attention should be paid to:-

- a) dylai meintiau'r ffenestri fod o'r un fath neu'n gydweddol,
- b) dylai rhaniadau mewnol feddu ar yr un gyfrannedd, gan roi'r un pwyslais lorweddol neu fertigol,
- c) dylai'r deunyddiau gydweddu â'r ffenestri presennol,
- ch) dylai ffenestri newydd fod ar yr un plaen â'r ffenestri presennol,
- d) mae arddull y ffenest yn bwysig iawn a dylid osgoi defnyddio ffenestri sydd ag arddull wahanol.



In some cases standard 'off the peg' windows may not be suitable for older properties in which case purpose made copies should be sought.

8.2 Materials

Wherever possible the materials used on the extension should match, or be sympathetic with, those of the existing building. Too many materials, or alien materials, can be too fussy and make the extension appear unrelated and thus out of place.

If an extension is to be in the same plane as the original building then, there must be maximum compatibility between old and new in terms of colour and texture of materials.

8.3 Dormers

Generally a high ridge can accommodate a modest sized dormer room without the form of the dwelling being too severely upset. Problems can arise however, when the existing house is not designed to take the dormer extension because of the angle of the ridge or because it would overlook the neighbours' habitable rooms. In such cases an alternative form of extension should be considered. Dormer extension will not normally be permitted on the front elevations of properties.

Dormer windows in roofs should complement the existing features of the dwelling in terms of its proportions, size and positioning. Avoid placing the dormer 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. 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 in order not to dominate the roof space. Generally dormers should be constructed in materials to match the existing dwelling.



8.4 Porches

Porches, like other extensions, should reflect the character of the building on which they are built, rather than look like an afterthought. Avoid incorporating too many materials or styles. 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.

9.0 Distances Between Windows

9.1 In designing residential extensions, particular attention must be paid to the relationship between windows of habitable rooms of adjacent properties (both new and existing) especially with regard to the provision and protection of privacy.

9.2 The definition of a habitable room shall be:-

"a room used or intended to be used for dwelling purposes, but not any room used exclusively as a bathroom, hall or utility room".

9.3 The Authority's guidelines are set out and illustrated below:-

Minimum Distances Between Windows (in metres).

Angle * at window of house to be created shall be not more than:-

	90°	80°	70°	60°	50°	40°	30°	20°	10°	0°
90°	18	18	18	18	13	9	6	4	3	2
80°	18	18	18	13	9	6	4	3	2	
70°	18	18	13	9	6	4	3	2		
60°	18	13	9	6	4	3	2			
50°	13	9	6	4	3	2				
40°	9	6	4	3	2					

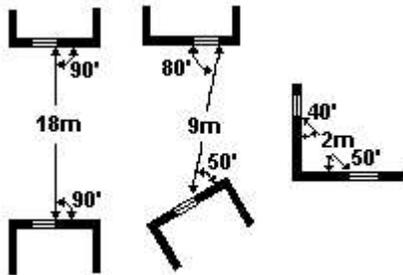
30°	6	4	3	2						
20°	4	3	2							
10°	3	2								
0°	2									

Distances shall be interpolated for intermediate angles

* That is the horizontal angle included between the shortest line joining any part of one window opening to any other.

Metres	Feet
18	60
13	42
9	29
6	19
4	13
3	10
2	6

These guidelines are considered sufficiently flexible, and exceptions will only be made where it can be demonstrated that they are justified by the particular circumstances.



10.0 Applying For Planning Permission

10.1 Planning application forms for extensions and other developments can be obtained from the Planning Section of the Development Department. The completed forms should be returned to the Authority for determination together with four copies of drawings showing:-

a) plans and elevations of the existing property and elevations of the adjoining property where appropriate.

- b) Plans and elevations of the property as proposed and sections where appropriate.
- c) Full details of the existing and proposed materials,
- d) Location plan of the property at 1/2500 or 1/250 scale.

The appropriate fee should also be submitted with each planning application.

11.0 Further Information

11.1 These notes should be used as a general guide only. If you do not understand how the principles discussed here apply to your type of house and the extension you want, or if you wish to discuss alternative forms of developing, please contact the Council's Planning staff at the Guildhall.