

South Derbyshire Design Guide

Appendix A - Extending your Home

November 2017



Appendix A

Extending your home

The Council aims to ensure that extensions are in keeping with the main dwelling and the general character of the area and avoid unreasonable impact on the living conditions of the occupiers of nearby dwellings.

In some cases planning permission will not be needed to extend your home. You can find out more about this on the [Planning Portal](#) or you apply for a formal [Certificate of Lawfulness](#).

It is a good idea to use a person qualified and experienced in designing residential extensions as there are [National Requirements](#) for every planning application. In addition there may be [Local Information Requirements](#) depending on the nature and location of the proposal. These are [South Derbyshire's Local Requirements](#)

Once you have obtained permission you may need to address other legal issues, for example [Building Regulations](#) , [Party Walls Act](#) and private covenants and obligations.

Appearance

With such a wide variety of types of house and layout in the environment there can be no hard and fast rule about how an extension should be designed. This can only be decided by careful examination of a particular building and its surroundings. Special considerations apply to listed buildings and conservation areas and "Historic South Derbyshire" (a further publication available from the Planning Office) will be used to consider the design of proposals affecting these. Outside settlements the Council will try and make sure that the impact on the countryside is minimal - this can mean that an extension is not as large as you may wish it to be.

For all applications, the following four points will be looked at:

1. Scale

What an extension looks like can have an important impact on the character of an area. As a general principle it is a good idea to ensure that an extension looks like a smaller part of the main dwelling, in a way that the main part of the building is not overpowered by it. This becomes particularly important when the main dwelling displays the traditional local distinctiveness of South Derbyshire. However, it is possible to gain a lot of extra space by designing the extension so that it looks smaller than it actually is.

For example instead of a large extension to the side of a house, a smaller side extension and a rear extension could be used to achieve a similar amount of space.



An example of a sympathetic extension

2. Character and Form

When extending it is usually necessary to reflect the existing character, form and proportion of buildings.

This means paying careful attention to gable widths, roof form, angles of roof pitches, the pattern and detailing of window and door openings, eaves and verges and any other particular detailed characteristic of the house.

The fine detailing of an extension can be crucial in fitting in with the main building. Where streets have an obvious character (e.g. Victorian and interwar streets) it will be particularly important to ensure careful attention to detail.

In more modern housing estates, where dwellings are not all the same, there can be more flexibility, but the general principles set out above will still be looked at. In some cases, for example in a street of houses set at regular intervals, care will need to be taken when extending to the side to avoid a 'terraced effect'.

In order to protect the character of non-terraced streets and to ensure that extensions are subordinate in scale and do not result in a terracing effect, two storey and first floor side extensions should be set back at first floor level from the front wall of the original house by a minimum of 1 metre, and have a lower ridge line than the existing property.

Two storey and first floor side extensions can have a significant impact on the street scene. The reduction in width or sometimes the total loss of space between properties can often create a 'terracing effect' where two properties join to create the impression of a continuous building frontage.

3. Position

The front of a dwelling is generally the most sensitive to alteration. Extensions here may not always be acceptable, particularly where there is an obvious 'building line'. Where an extension is acceptable, the Council will look very carefully at the features that make up the main building, especially roof pitches, window patterns and other architectural details.

Side extensions can also have a significant effect on what a building will look like. Where side extensions are acceptable, particularly if higher than single storey, care should be taken to make sure that they complement and sit comfortably alongside the main dwelling. The complete structure (main dwelling and extension) should be assessed as a new building in its own right and should be no less attractive than the main dwelling was originally, and ideally be an improvement in appearance. Attractiveness and appearance are assessed on factors such as: style, detailing, scale, height, massing, proportion, order, symmetry, materials, relationship to adjacent properties, relationship with the wider streetscape and the rhythm of frontages.

In some cases, for example at the end of a terrace, the best design solution may be to add an extension at the same height and width as the terrace. Rear extensions should present fewer problems, but two-storey extensions in particular, should not upset the basic shape and design of the house.

Roof extensions will normally be very noticeable and in some cases may not be acceptable. Small roof dormers with pitched roofs set well below the ridge generally look better because they are less likely to harm the character of a building. Roof extensions to the rear are likely to be more acceptable but must still be in keeping with the building. Flat roofs on two storey extensions will not normally be allowed.

4. Materials

The use of the right materials is very important and the Council will usually require that materials match the existing building or will want to see samples for approval. Sometimes, for example where an existing building has been rendered, it may be better to use materials that do not match, although it

is usually a good idea to find materials that have similar colour, size and texture. Setting an extension in reveal to existing walls can help to reduce the visual impact of a slight mis-match in materials.

Effect on Neighbours

The effect of an extension on neighbours often causes most concern. Because one person's idea of what is acceptable is not necessarily the same as another's, the Council has written guidelines to be fair to both sides, although it is always necessary to consider proposals on their own merits.

Normally, extensions that meet the guidelines will be acceptable. The main issues that concern neighbours are overlooking (or loss of privacy) and overshadowing (or overbearing).

In order to protect the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings from overlooking and to protect privacy, the 'primary' windows of the neighbouring dwellings should not fall within the minimum distance (as set out in the table overleaf) within the sector of view of the 'primary' windows of the proposed extension.

These guidelines will be applied on the particular merits of the situation but not to side and 'secondary' windows to either property as this would be likely to result in those applying being unfairly disadvantaged.

Where the view between windows can be prevented (e.g. by a screen wall or fence of reasonable height) then the minimum distances may be reduced. Shrubs and trees are not normally reliable as a screen because they may not always be there.

In order to protect windows in neighbouring dwellings from overshadowing, proposed two-storey extensions should not breach the minimum distance (set out in the Distance Guidelines table) along a 45° line drawn from the centre of the nearest ground floor 'primary' window of the neighbouring property. Single storey extensions will be decided on their own merits.

Distance Guidelines

NEIGHBOURING DWELLING

All distances in metres

P R O P O S E D D W E L L I N G O R E X T E N S I O N		Lounge/dining room	Kitchen	Bedroom/study (first floor)	Bedroom/study (ground floor)	Conservatory
	Lounge/dining room	21	21	15	18	21
	Kitchen	21	21	15	18	21
	Bedroom/study (first floor)	21	21	15	18	21
	Bedroom/study (ground floor)	18	18	12	15	18
	Conservatory	21	21	15	18	21
	Blank elevation	12	12	No minimum	9	9

The guidelines assume that sites are relatively level, with little or no screening and normal ground floor and first floor layouts. The guidance also assumes straightforward identification of front, rear and side elevations. Where situations arise that do not readily fit these guidelines, decisions will be made on the merits of the case. For example, full height first floor windows can exacerbate overlooking.

Although most houses overlook neighbouring rear gardens to some extent, areas closest to main windows are where occupants most value privacy. The impact of new development on such private outdoor areas will therefore be assessed on the merits of each case. Balconies serving upper floors will usually create unacceptable overlooking and should be avoided unless they can be effectively screened, or are well away from neighbours.

Definitions

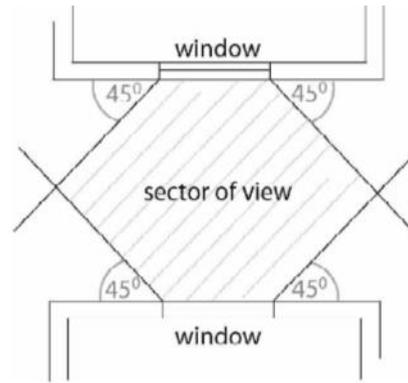
No Minimum: The application is to be considered on its merits.

Primary Window: Main window to a lounge, dining room, kitchen, bedroom/study or conservatory.

Secondary Window: Any subsidiary window to a lounge, dining room, kitchen, bedroom/study, or conservatory affording light to that room.

Blank elevation: An elevation with either no windows or with windows to rooms other than to a lounge, dining room, kitchen, bedroom/study or conservatory.

Sometimes, rear gardens of existing dwellings will be of such a depth that the distances between dwellings will be met regardless of how close to the boundary an opposing new property would be sited. In these circumstances, the presence of first floor primary windows in the new dwelling could lead to a significant loss of privacy to the entire private space of the existing property. In such cases, the Council will seek to ensure that the proposed dwelling is located a reasonable distance from the garden boundary of the existing dwelling.



For flats, it is recommended that one unallocated visitor space is provided for every two dwellings (half a space per dwelling).

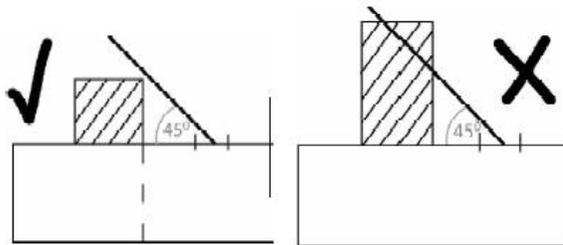
These spaces should ideally be in addition to any garage provision. See the Garage size rules and design guidance within section 8 – Make parking comfortable within the Street Design, Movement and Legibility section to find out what constitutes a parking space in a garage.

Access and parking

When looking at proposals for extensions, the Council will try and make sure that there is enough parking at the property. The advice below can be applied to all residential developments.

Variations may be considered due to location (such as town centre sites).

Please see the latest version of the 6C's Design Guide⁶ for further guidance on parking provision.



Where elevations are opposite each other, separated by public areas, such as a road, and having regard to the overall character of the surrounding area, the guidelines will usually be relaxed.

The Council strongly encourages two spaces per dwelling.

For homes of four bedrooms or more, it is recommended that three spaces are provided.



South Derbyshire Design Guide

Supplementary Planning Document

November 2017

Final Version 2.2

Published by South Derbyshire District Council, Civic Offices, Civic Way, Swadlincote, Derbyshire DE11 0AH