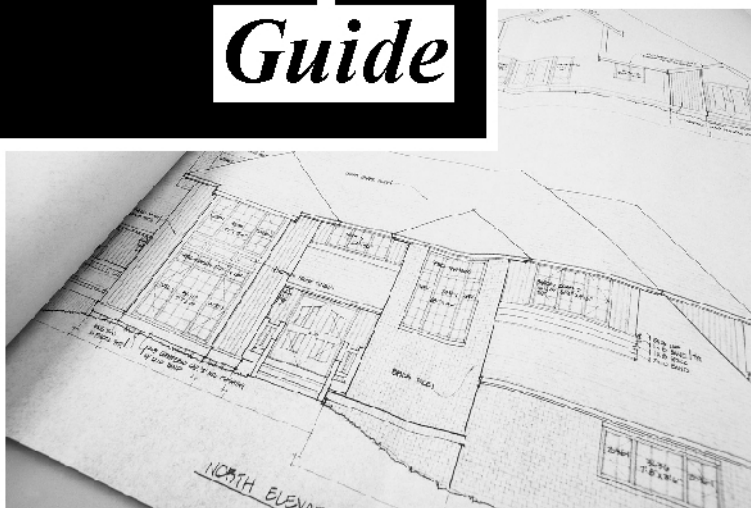


# Gloucester City Council

## Home Extension *Guide*



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## Home Extension Guide



## 1. INTRODUCTION purpose of this guide

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) outlines the Council's planning policy approach in relation home extensions in Gloucester. It forms part of the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) for the City.

This SPD has been subject to two periods of public consultation, and in both cases has been revised to take account of the responses received. This is set out in the associated response reports.

This SPD has been adopted by the Council as 'Interim Supplementary Policy' for the purposes of Development Control.

This SPD will be formally adopted as part of the LDF alongside its 'parent' Development Plan Document (DPD), with any further, necessary amendments made at that stage.

This guide has been produced to assist you in the design of your house extension. The purpose of this guide is not to be prescriptive, but to assist you in getting the design right first time. Extending your home is something that is often only done once in a lifetime, and an unsightly or poorly designed extension could possibly devalue your home, or inhibit its future sale. This guide should help you to achieve a well-designed extension, which will positively enhance your existing home, both in function and appearance.

The Council seeks a high standard of design to house extensions to ensure that the extension is appropriate to the character and appearance of your existing property, and the existing streetscene around your property. It is also the Council's responsibility to ensure that any extension to a property that requires planning permission will not cause unreasonable harm to the surrounding neighbour's, or their enjoyment of their property.

This guide provides general guidance as to what is normally considered to be appropriate to the Council in the majority of cases, and should be used to assist you, your planning agent or architect in making a successful planning application. However, each application is determined on its own merits in relation to the particular impact(s) on the neighbours, the application property and the streetscene.

Planning permission is not always required for minor residential extensions. Many households benefit from Permitted Development Rights, which means that some minor works can be carried out without requiring planning permission. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has produced a booklet entitled 'Planning a guide for householders' which explains what works can generally be done under Permitted Development Rights.

However, please bear in mind that that the Council have taken away permitted development rights from some properties in the city. In these cases planning permission will be required for even minor works, although they are exempt from any fee. You are advised to always check first with the Council's Development Control Team (details at the back of this guide).

For a full legal determination on whether or not your proposed extension requires planning permission, or is deemed lawful (and therefore does not require planning permission) we would advise you to make an application for a Certificate of Lawful Development. These certificates can be extremely useful especially if you ever decide to sell your property, as they would prove that your extension did not require planning permission and thereby assist you with the sale of your property.

Further details about Certificates of Lawful Development can be obtained by contacting the Council's Planning Technical Officer in the Development Control Team. (Details at the back of this guide).

## 2. Before you design your extension

1. Read this guide carefully and take in to account the points raised – they will assist you in deciding the most appropriate location for your own extension and how much additional space you are likely to realistically be able to achieve.

2. Analyse your home – what are its characteristics, what shape and size are the windows and doors, what shape is the roof, how much space is there around your home, what materials is it constructed from, how much garden area do you have?

3. Analyse your street – what are its characteristics, how much space is there between properties, how far back are the properties from the road, how do people define their boundaries, what are the houses like next door to yours and across the street?

When the Council assesses a planning application it refers to its planning policies. The current policies broadly state that when designing your house extension there are two essential rules to remember:

1. Your extension must be of a design, size and scale that is appropriate and respectful to the character of the locality and the appearance of your existing house.

2. Your extension must not unreasonably impact upon the amenities enjoyed by your neighbours.

Each of these points is explored in more detail through the two main sections of this guide.

A further issue to take into account is flood risk. Where the property to be extended is located within a designated flood risk zone, the Council will expect the issue of flood risk to be adequately addressed through the design of the proposed extension.

Further advice and guidance is provided in the Environment Agency's publication 'Standing Advice - Development and Floodrisk', which is available to view at [www.pipernetworking.com/floodrisk/index.html](http://www.pipernetworking.com/floodrisk/index.html)

As a general note, there may be examples of extensions near to you, or in other locations across the city, which were constructed before this guide was published, and do not comply with its principles. These extensions will not be considered as setting a precedent when assessing your proposed extension. Just because a similar extension received planning permission in the past, does not mean that it would necessarily receive permission in today's planning environment. The city council is committed to ensuring a high quality of design to house extensions and will seek to ensure that the principles within this guide are fully implemented.

## **Good neighbourliness**

Although the final decision rests with the Council, or in the case of an appeal the Planning Inspectorate, it is always a good idea to envisage what the extension would be like if you actually lived next door. Would you feel blocked in or overlooked? Would the extension feel too close, dominant/overbearing or cause a loss of light to your home?

By examining what it would appear like from your neighbour's point of view you can often gain a little insight into what is and is not acceptable. Ask yourself 'Would I like this extension next door to me?' and 'Would this have a negative affect on the enjoyment of my home?'

Generally the city council encourages potential applicants to consider discussing their proposals with their neighbours before an application is made. The benefits include:

- N Your neighbours will feel that you have made effort to keep them informed.
- N It can avoid your neighbours becoming alarmed when they receive our notification letter.

## **Disabled access**

There is no requirement under the planning legislation or Building Regulations to create disabled access to your proposed extension. However, the council would encourage the provision of a ramped access to any new external doorway to your extension so that visitors with mobility difficulties can gain access more easily. The doors should then have a clear width of 800 millimetres. This would also make access easier for the elderly, pushchairs and furniture removal. Further advice on this issue can be obtained from our Building Standards and Control Section (details at the back of this guide).

## **Building regulations**

The majority of extensions, regardless of whether or not they require planning permission, will require building regulations. Planning permission and Building Regulations are two very separate requirements. Obtaining planning permission does NOT mean that you have obtained Building Regulations Approval – and vice versa.

You are advised to contact Building Standards and Control as early as possible to discuss your proposals (details at the back of this guide).

## Listed buildings & conservation areas

Special care and attention is required when extending a Listed Building or a property within the Conservation Area. Please refer to the City Council's guides 'Listed Buildings in Gloucester' and 'Conservation Areas in Gloucester' or contact a member of our conservation team for further advice (details at the back of this guide.) All extensions to Listed Buildings will also require the benefit of Listed Building Consent.

## Trees

Wherever possible you should site your extension to avoid the removal of significant and healthy trees. Also ensure that if a young tree is to remain close to the extension that it has room for future growth. This will help to ensure that the tree does not have to be removed in the future should it begin to affect the structure of the extension. If the loss of a tree is unavoidable, a replacement should be planted in another location within the site.

The City Council can make a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) in order to protect important trees. Once a tree is protected, it is an offence to cut down, lop, top, uproot, wilfully damage and/or destroy it without first seeking the permission of the City Council. It is recommended that a check be made to identify any TPO trees that stand within the area of the extension or works.

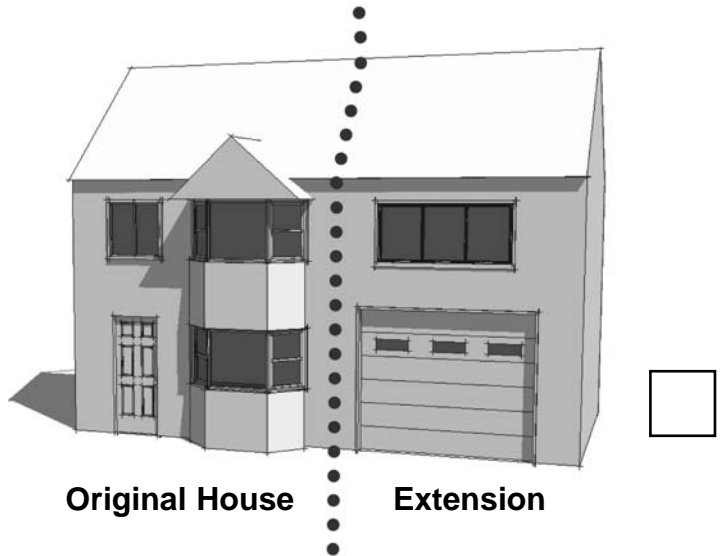
Every effort should be made to avoid damage to trees during building works, including damaging roots. Officers are available to advise about protecting trees close to building works. Please contact a member of the Council's landscaping team for further information (details at the back of this guide).



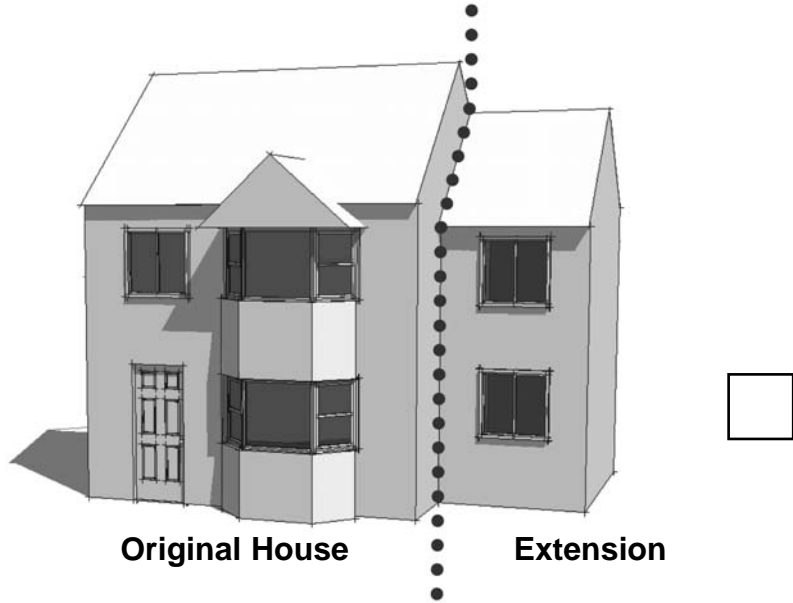
**Section 1**  
**Style form**  
**and design**

*Your extension must be of a style, form and design that is appropriate and respectful to the character of the locality and the appearance of your existing house.*

A. The extension should not swamp or dominate the existing property but should sit harmoniously and sympathetically alongside it.

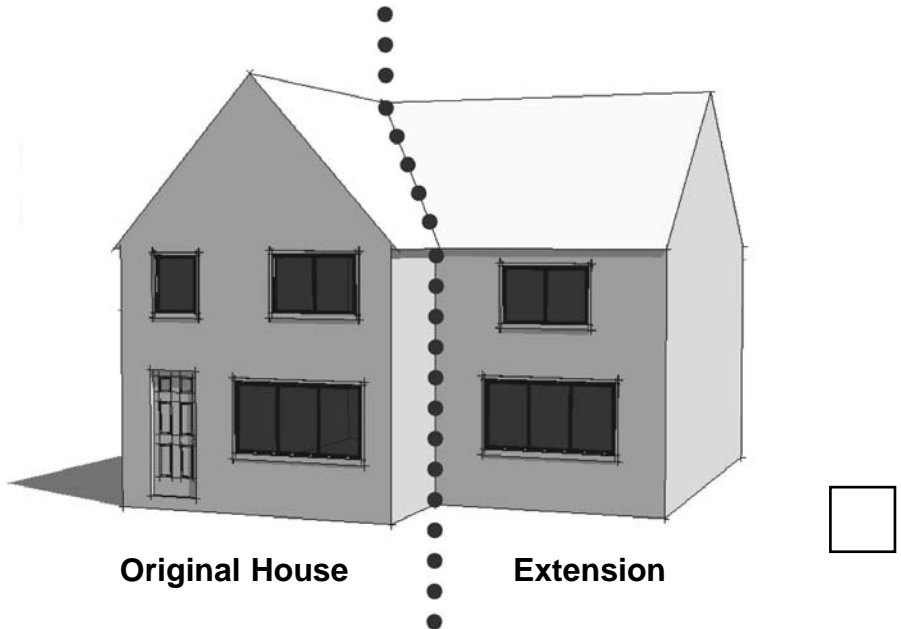


Overly dominant extension – This extension is overly large and swamps the original property. The window design should normally match those used in the original house.



Subservient extension – This extension is subservient to the original house, in that it does not dominate it but sits harmoniously alongside it. The window design and spacing also respects those used in the original house, and are in proportion to the extension.

B. The extension should respect the character of the existing property and be fully integrated into the design so that it appears as part of the original house.

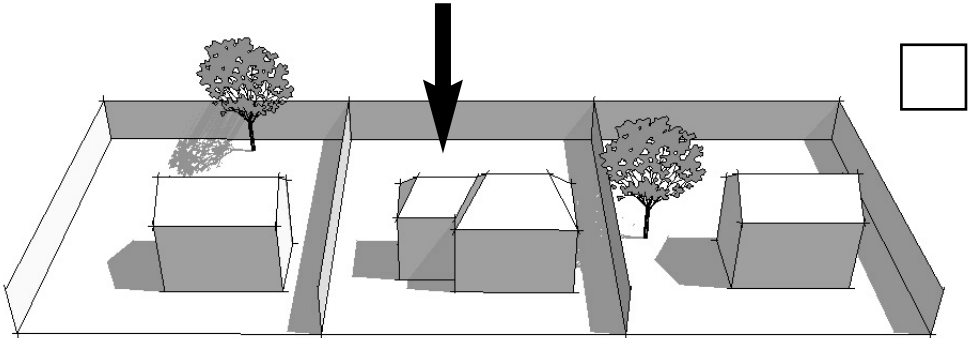


Integrated – This extension has been fully integrated with the design and appearance of the original house so that it appears as part of it.

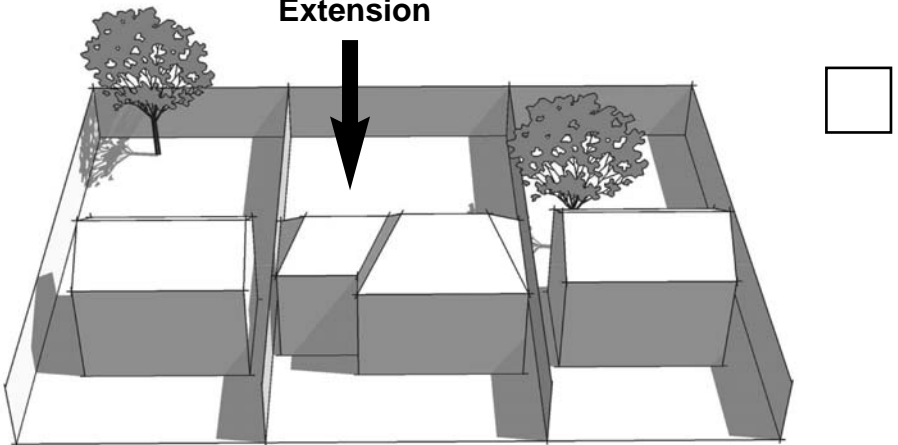
In some cases a dominant, a well-designed, contemporary extension may be considered appropriate, providing that it compliments the existing property and streetscene without adversely harming the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers.

**C.** Large side extensions will only normally be considered on detached properties where there is adequate space around the property to ensure that it will not appear cramped or awkward in the streetscene, or adversely affect the occupiers of the neighbouring properties.

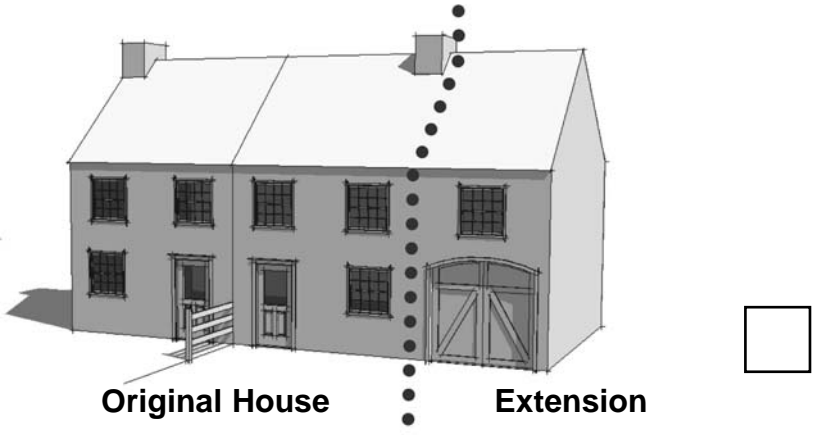
**Extension**



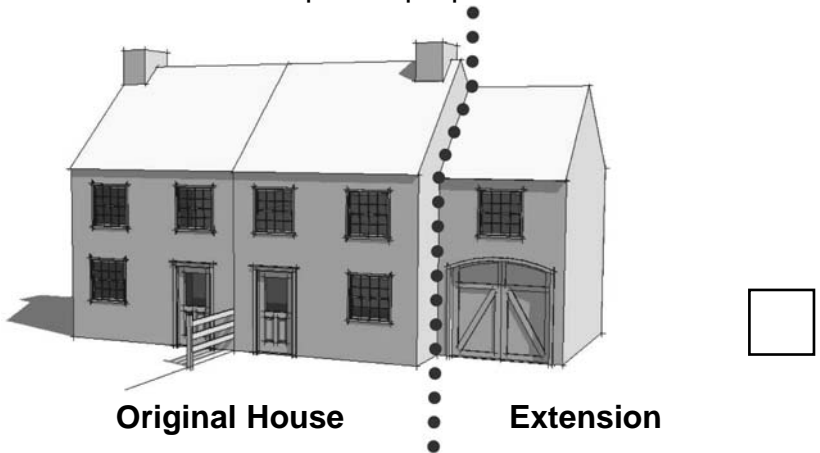
**Extension**



D. Side extensions to semi-detached properties should normally be set back from the front of the property and set down from the ridge line to ensure that it does not adversely detract from the pair of properties.

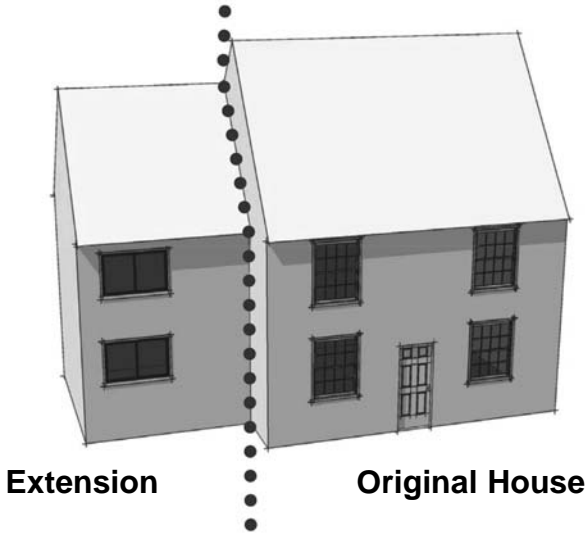


Semi with extension not set back – Poorly designed oversized extension that detracts from the pair of properties.

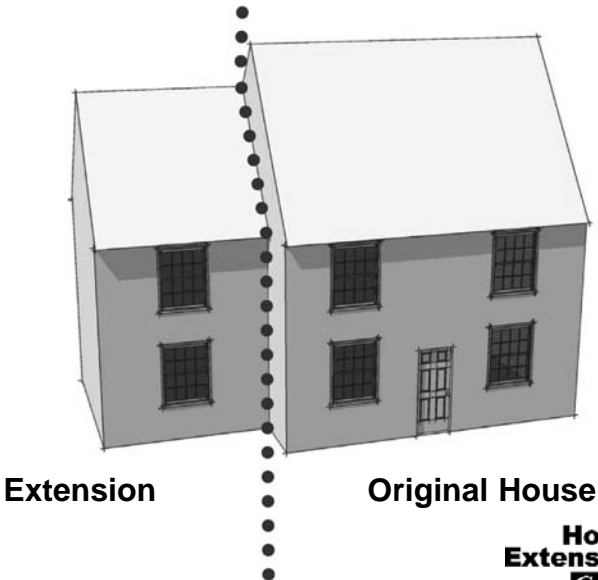


Semi with extension set back – Extension has been set back and down by a sufficient amount to ensure that it does not overly dominate the pair of properties.

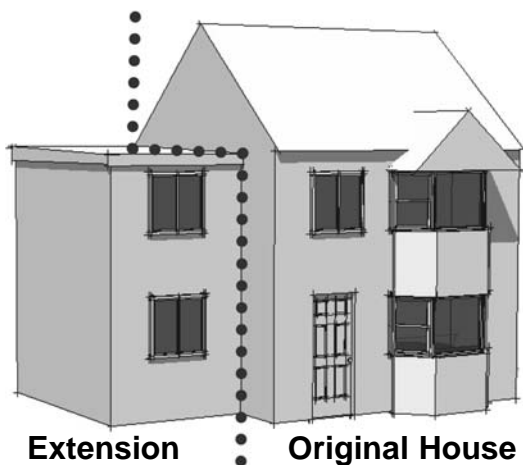
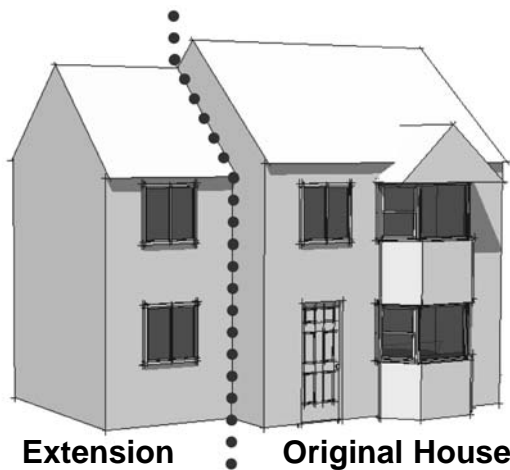
F. The spacing, style and form of new windows should normally match those of the existing property.



Windows – The windows in this extension do not match the existing property both in design and style and in their spacing on the extension.

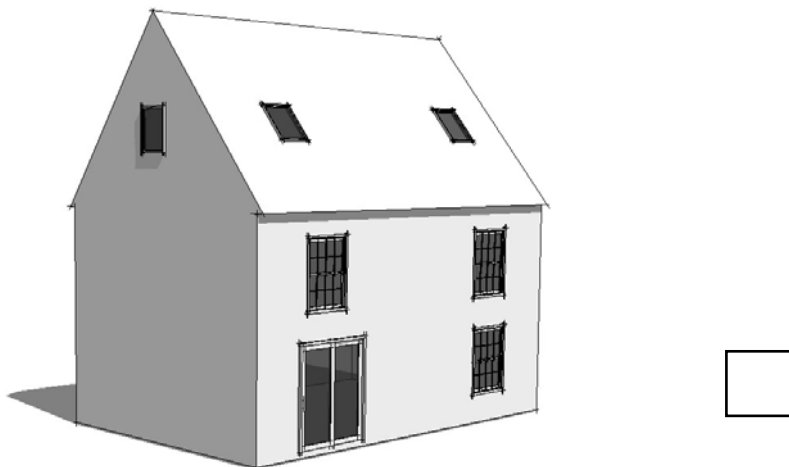


G. In the majority of cases the roof of the extension should match the style and pitch of the existing roof.



Flat roof – Flat roofs will not normally be permitted on two-storey extensions where they are visible from the street. Pitched roofs will be encouraged on rear extensions as they are often more appropriate to the design of the original house and have a longer lifespan, although flat roofs may also be acceptable, commonly on single storey side or rear extensions.

H. The best solution to create light in a loft conversion is roof lights, which should be located on the least prominent roof face, usually the rear. It may also be possible to add a side gable window without the benefit of planning permission.



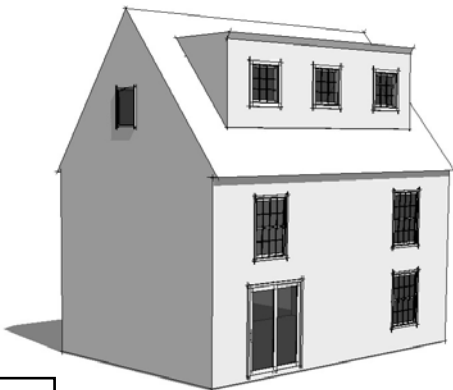
Skylights – Skylights placed discreetly in rear of property, and window positioned in the side gable.

I. Dormer windows can be a very prominent feature with the potential to dominate the appearance of the original roof. Dormer windows should be of an appropriate size and scale to sit comfortably on the roof and not appear as an obvious addition.

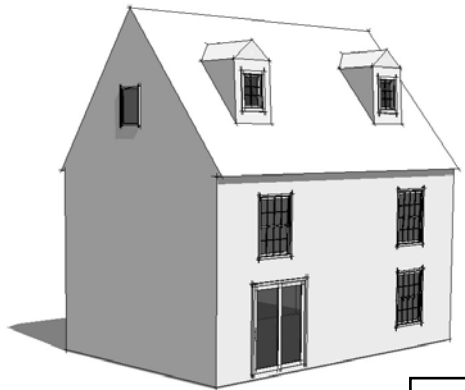
1. If a dormer window is unavoidable, it should ideally be located at the rear of the property.
2. The dormer should not be overly dominant.
3. The dormer should be constructed below ridge level and above the eaves.



4. The extension should be constructed in materials to match or harmonise with the existing roof materials.
5. The dormer should not harm the character of the street
6. The dormer should not result in adverse overlooking to your neighbours.
7. The style and location of windows on the dormer extension should harmonise with the windows on the original dwelling.

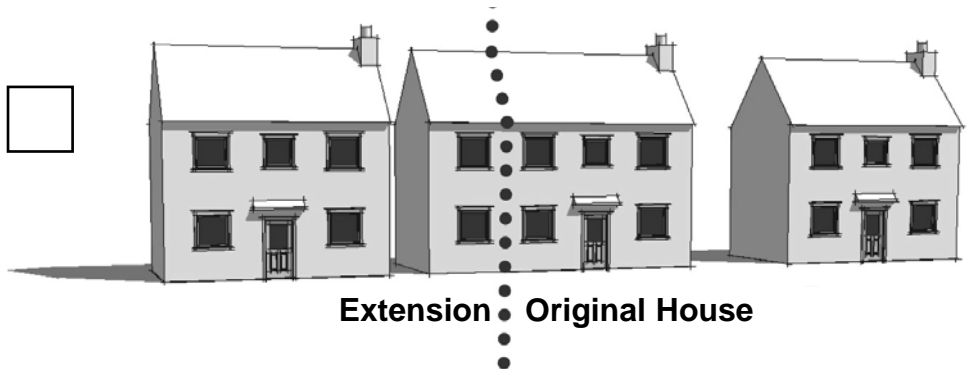


Oversized dormers – Overly dominant dormer windows inappropriate to the character and appearance of the house will not be acceptable.



Dormers good – Appropriately scaled dormer windows that are sympathetic to the character and appearance of the house will be considered acceptable.

J. Consider the spacing around your property and in the streetscene. Avoid filling up spaces and closing gaps that form part of the character and rhythm of the street.



Rhythmic street With two storey extension - Extensions which adversely impact on the character of the street will not normally be permitted.



Rhythmic street single storey – A single storey side extension appears more sympathetic and maintains the spacing of the street.

Building close to your neighbour can create a terracing effect, which can degrade the visual appearance of both properties, and have a negative effect on the wider streetscene. It may also ultimately reduce the value of your property.

In some cases where the spacing is a strong element of the character of the streetscene, a two-storey side extension may not be appropriate.

Although not a planning consideration, think about future maintenance and allow enough space to be able to practically carry this out.

L. In the majority of circumstances the materials and the detailing of the proposed extension should match and properly blend with the existing house.

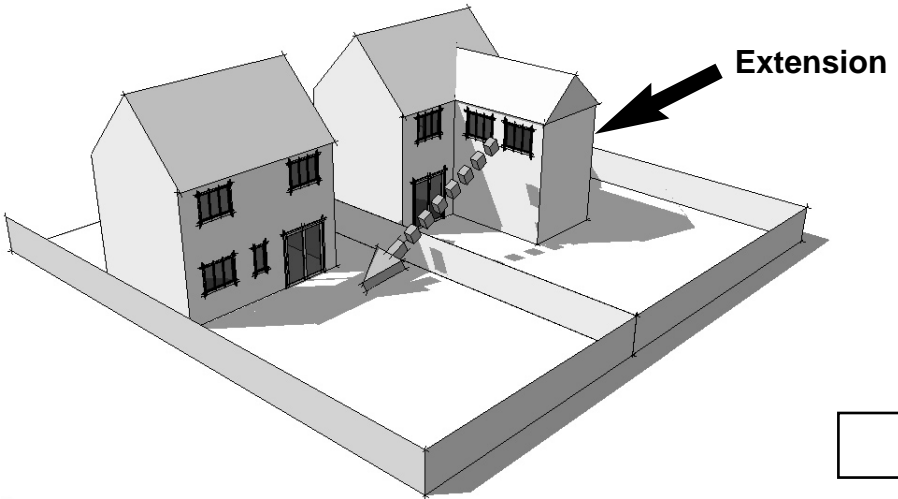
Setting the extension in slightly from the original house can help to create a better join in the materials.

**Section 2  
Impacting  
on others  
around you**

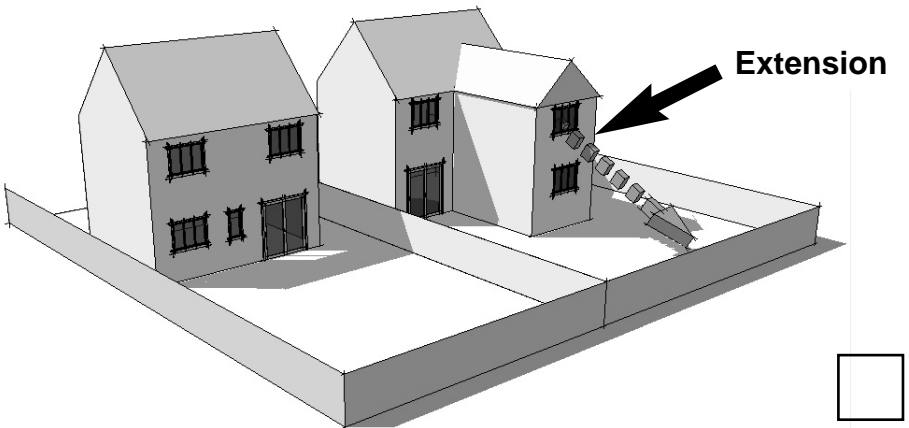
*Your extension must not unreasonably impact upon the amenities enjoyed by your neighbours.*

**A. Overlooking**

The Council will not permit extensions that will result in adverse loss of privacy to your neighbours. Windows in the extension must therefore be positioned extremely carefully. First floor side windows, which look directly across to your neighbour's property or garden, should generally be avoided and will not normally be permitted. Particular care should be given to the immediate intimate space at the rear of the neighbour's property.



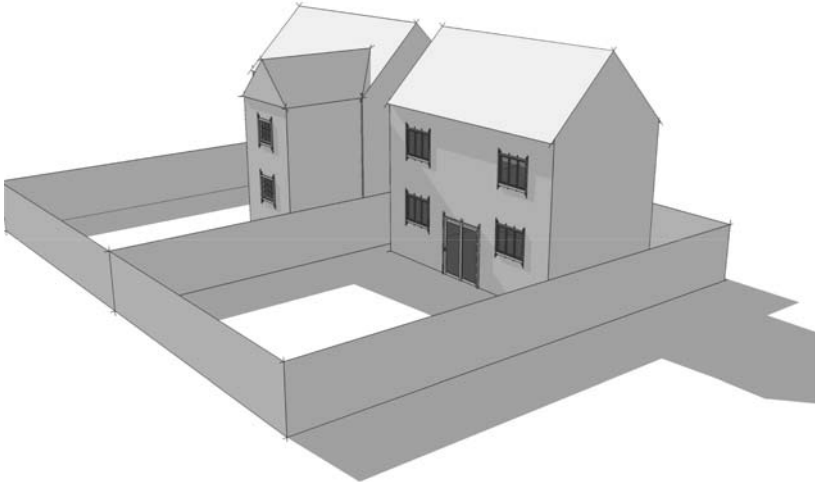
Overlooking – First floor windows in the side elevation can result in overlooking and loss of privacy to your neighbours.



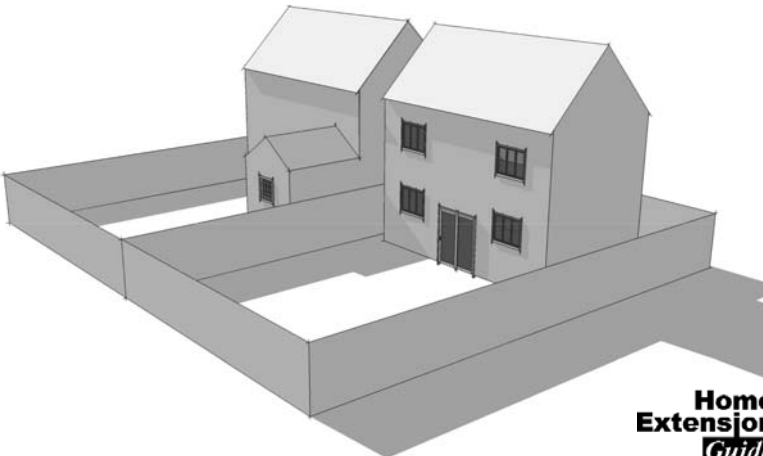
Rear windows – Siting the windows in the rear elevation so that they face out onto your own garden is preferable, and reduces overlooking. Ground floor windows in the side elevation of any extension will only be permitted if there is a sufficient boundary treatment to prevent adverse overlooking or loss of privacy.

## B. Overshadowing

The City Council will not permit applications that result in adverse overshadowing to neighbouring properties. Look carefully at the path of the sun throughout the day. Consider where shadows fall and use this information to help you position your extension.



Overshadowing - This two-storey extension would not normally receive planning permission. This would be considered both dominant and overbearing resulting in adverse overshadowing due to its overall position in close proximity to the neighbouring boundary.



## **C. Overbearing**

The positioning, design and mass of your extension should not be dominant or have an adverse impact on any windows that may be present in your neighbour's property. Particular attention will be paid to protecting principle habitable rooms. These may include windows serving the living room, dining room, kitchen or bedroom (of less concern are windows serving hallways, landings and bathrooms.) In all cases the impact on windows will be fully assessed. If your extension would adversely affect the living conditions within your neighbour's property, planning permission would normally be refused. Single storey rear extensions of excessive depth will not normally be permitted due to their intrusive nature within private rear garden areas. The 45 degree rule will apply - see below.

## **D. The 45 degree rule**

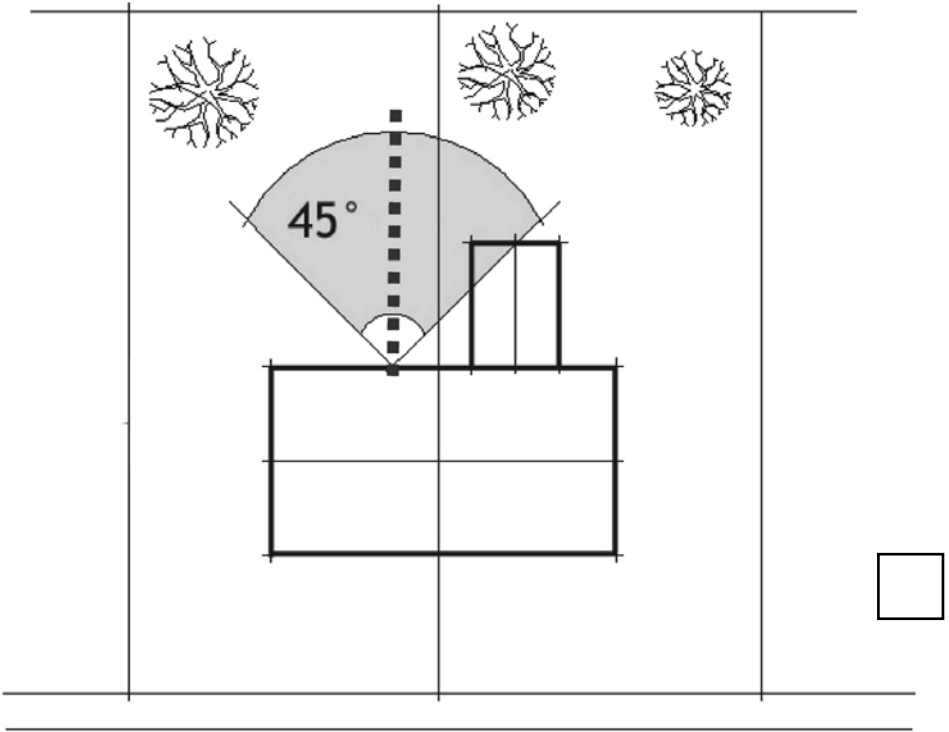
As a general rule of thumb to check whether or not your extension may result in a loss of light to adjoining windows, apply the 45 degree rule explained below.

There are two methods for applying the 45 degree rule, and both will be considered when assessing an application. The first considers the depth and width of the extension and the second looks at the height. If the proposed extension breaks one of the 45 degree lines it may be unacceptable, if it breaks both it would normally be found unacceptable.

This rule should be applied to both single storey and two storey extensions.

Firstly to work out the depth and width, draw your proposed extension in plan form and then also accurately plot on your neighbour's property and the position of the nearest window serving a habitable room on to the plan.

Then mark the centre point of your neighbour's window and from this point draw a 45 degree splay line out towards your property.



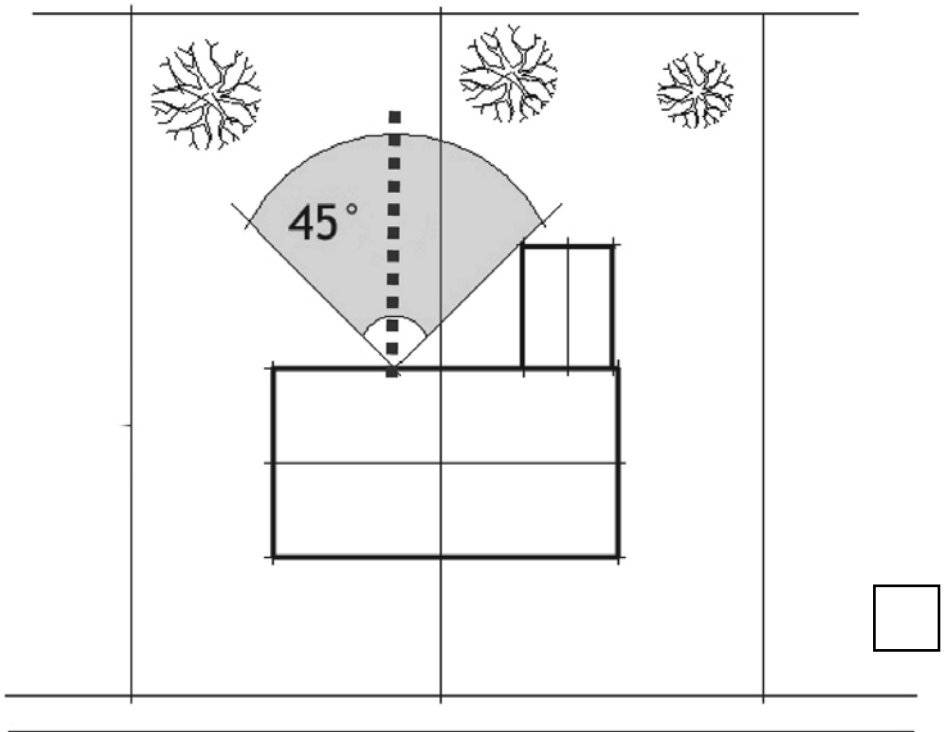
The 45 degree rule - A 45 degree splay line has been drawn from the centre of the neighbours nearest window. As the extension falls within the 45 degree splay, this would normally be considered unacceptable.

In this example there is only one neighbour to the side. If your property is between two properties, make sure that you include them both.



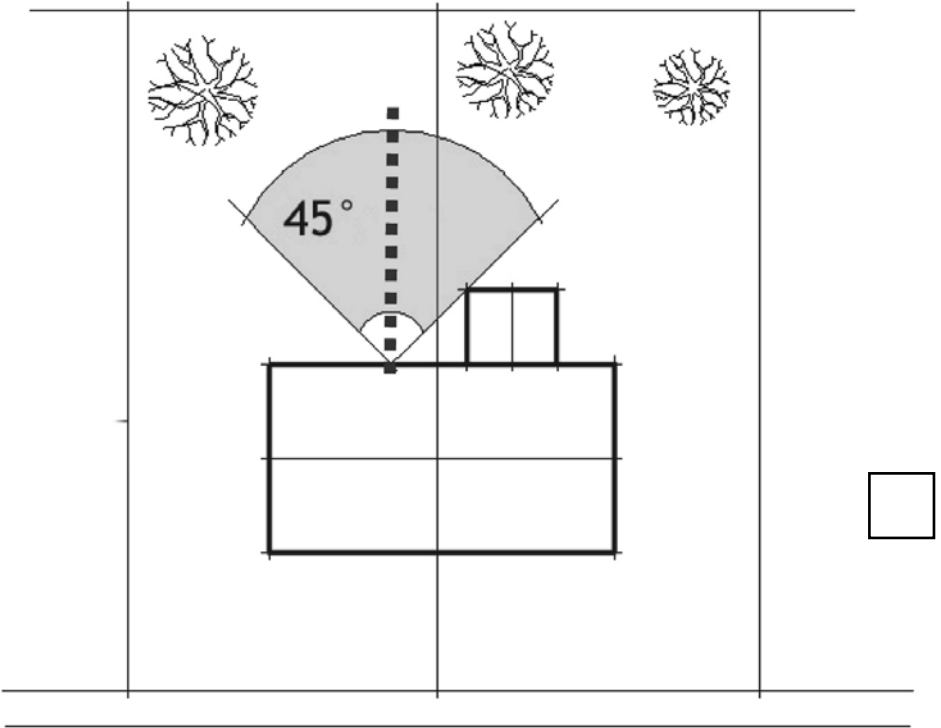
If the extension does lie within the 45 degree splay then you will need to redesign it in order to reduce the impacts to your neighbours. There are various ways to redesign the extension to make it less overbearing.

You could push the extension away from the 45 degree line.



Option 1 - In this example the extension has been moved away from the boundary with the neighbouring property to a point where it is outside of the 45 degree splay lines.

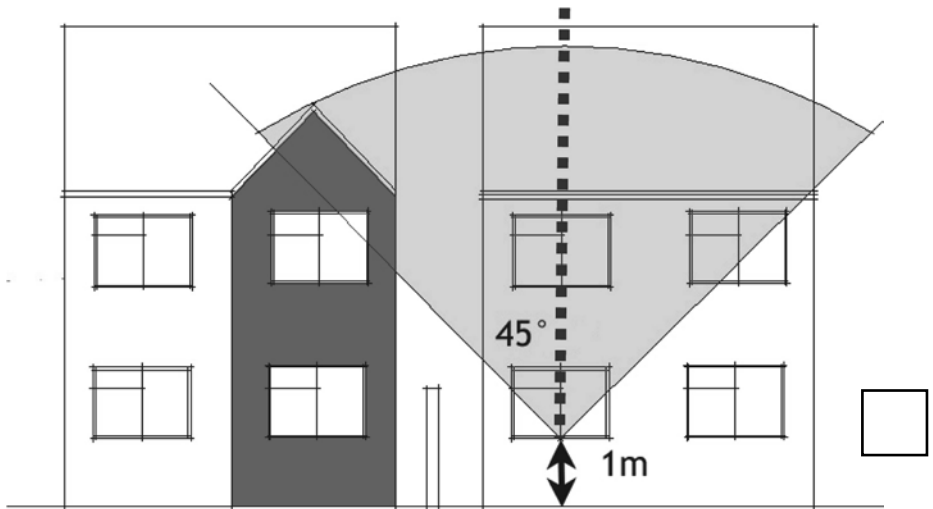
You could also reduce the depth of the extension.



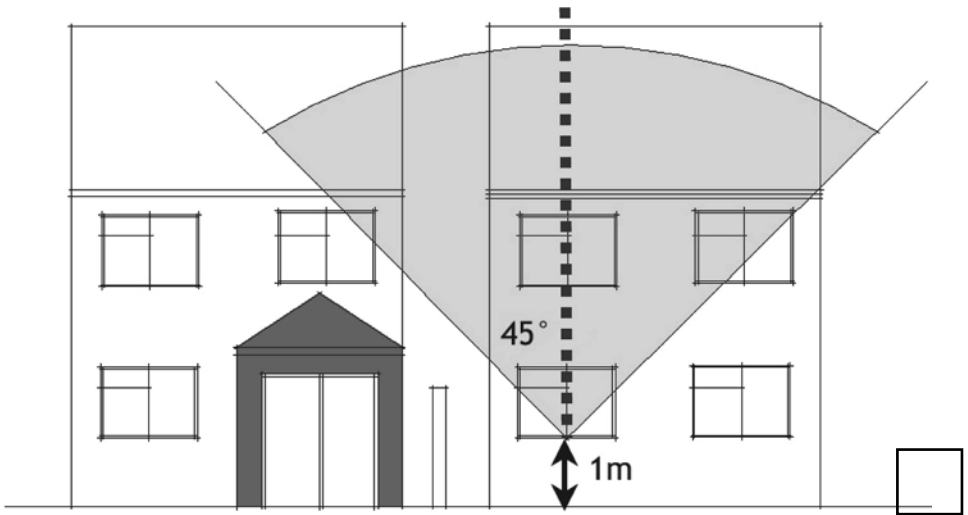
Option 2 - depth of extension reduced to a point where it is located outside of the 45 degree splay lines.

The second method is to determine the maximum height normally allowed for the extension. Draw the rear elevation of your property and any neighbouring properties. Make sure that your elevations reflect any changes in levels between your property and your neighbours. Mark the centre of the window cill of your neighbours nearest habitable ground floor window to the extension.

From this point draw the 45 degree splay lines towards the site for the extension. This will then indicate the maximum permissible height. If your extension breaks this line than it would normally be considered unacceptable.



Establishing the height - In this case the extension falls within the 45 degree splay lines and would be considered unacceptable. The extension will need to be moved away from the boundary or reduced in height, to a point where it was no longer within the 45 degree splay.



Reduced Height - the extension has been reduced to an extent where it falls well outside of the 45 degree splay lines.

The 45 degree rule to establish the maximum permissible height, width and depth of an extension provides a good general guide to what is normally considered acceptable. However, it is only a general rule of thumb and the council may on occasion consider an extension to be unacceptable even though it may appear acceptable on paper.

It is advisable to locate any extension as far from the 45 degree lines as practically possible to reduce the impacts to your neighbours and thereby increase your chances of producing an acceptable extension.