

Supplementary Planning Document

Extensions to Dwellings



Rutland
County Council

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Supplementary Planning Document

Extensions to Dwellings

Title

Extensions to Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document

Subject matter

The purpose of this document is to provide more detailed guidance on the design of house extensions, elaborating on the general design policies in the Local Plan.

Adoption Date

The Extensions to Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document was adopted by Rutland County Council on 9 March 2015.

This document can be made available on request in large print or Braille by contacting:

The Planning Policy Manager
Rutland County Council
Catmose
Oakham
Rutland
LE15 6HP

Tel: 01572 722577

Fax: 01572 758427

E-mail: localplan@rutland.gov.uk

Web: www.rutland.gov.uk/localplan

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Extensions to Dwellings

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to provide more detailed guidance on the design of house extensions, elaborating on the general design policies in the Local Plan.

Policy CS19 in the Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) provides the overarching policy on promoting good design.

Policy SP15 of the Council's Site Allocations and Policies DPD provides more detailed guidance on extensions to dwellings. It includes the relationship to surroundings and other development, amenity, detailed design and materials. This document provides more detailed guidance, specific to domestic extensions.

WHEN IS PLANNING PERMISSION REQUIRED?

Depending on its size, location and various other factors, a domestic extension may require a planning application to be submitted to the Council. However, in some cases an application is not required. These cases are known as "permitted development".

Under new regulations introduced by the government in May 2013, the depth that single storey extensions are allowed to extend to the rear of domestic dwellings has been increased for a temporary period until 30 May 2016.

Further information on the circumstances in which a planning application is required for an extension can be found on the UK Planning Portal www.planningportal.gov.uk. However many properties in Rutland have their 'permitted development rights' removed and only a preliminary enquiry made to the Council will establish the need for an application. Such permitted development rights are limited within Conservation Areas, so it is more likely that a planning application will be needed.

All extensions to 'listed buildings' will require listed building consent whatever the size or type of extension proposed.

National planning guidance encourages you to discuss your proposal with a Planning Officer at the Council. A formal preliminary inquiry service is available, through which a Planning Officer will advise if a planning application is needed. If so, the advice can also cover the suitability of the design, size and position of the extension.

This document will be used by the Council in determining planning applications. It can also be used by homeowners, as a source of good practice when preparing designs or a scheme that does not require a planning application.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES APPLICABLE TO ALL EXTENSIONS

In determining the type of extension to a dwelling, consideration should be given to the following general principles. These are particularly relevant to listed buildings and dwellings within Conservation Areas.

Appearance of extensions

The extension will be expected to respect its wider surroundings, (the street scene), in terms of its scale, position, design and building materials. Any extension in a conservation area must preserve or enhance the area and not detract from it. Similarly, an extension to a listed building or an extension viewed in relation to a listed building must be sympathetic to the listed building and its setting.

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Scale/size

- The extension is expected to respect the scale and character of the existing dwelling whose integrity should be maintained. Regardless of the size of dwelling, the extension should be a subordinate addition.

Fig 1a: House as originally built

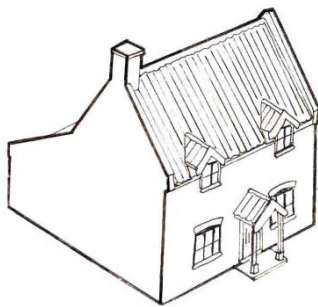
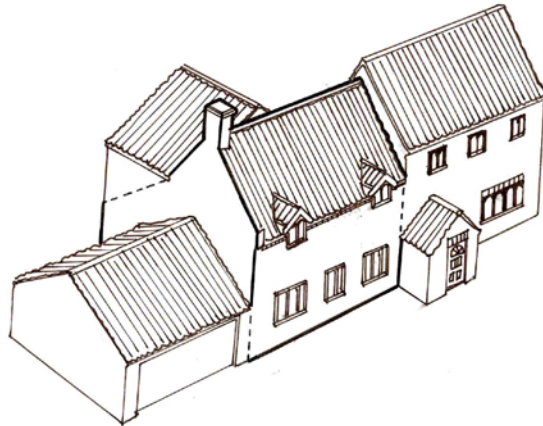


Fig 1b: Extensions that disregard the integrity, form and scale of the existing house



Shape/form

- Extensions are expected to be designed to reflect the shape and form of the original house, which is often indicative of the period in which the house was built, or to be sympathetic to that form (Fig 1a & 1b above);
- The roof of the extension is expected to reflect that of the main house. Generally a house with a pitched roof should have an extension with a similar roof form; however the ridge and eaves line of the extension are expected to be lower than the ridge and eaves line of the original house;
- Asymmetric, flat and shallow roofed extensions rarely harmonise with the shape and form of traditionally constructed houses and are not recommended; all extensions at two storey level should be designed with a pitched roof.

Character

- Existing local character is expected to be reflected in the design of an extension, particularly where listed buildings and Conservation Areas are involved. Many older houses particularly in the rural areas have a distinct period character;
- Architectural features are expected to mirror the character of the existing building to help create a unified overall appearance;
- Details such as lintels, corbels, eaves and sills are expected to reflect the method of construction and where possible match the original house;
- Chimneys are expected to be retained, where possible, because they often contribute to an interesting and traditional roof form;
- New windows and doors are expected to match the style, size and proportions of those on the original building.

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Materials

- External materials are expected to reinforce local distinctiveness in terms of type, colour and method of construction whilst matching or complementing the existing dwelling;
- Where brick or stone is used they are expected to match existing sizes, coursing, finish and method of pointing;
- Pitched roofs are expected to be of materials to match the existing roof;
- Dormers are expected to be of modest size and to match or complement the existing building;
- Window materials are expected to be consistent with the original house. The use of UPVC can be very damaging to a building's character and appearance.

Effects on neighbouring property

The extension must not be unduly detrimental to the amenities of occupiers of adjoining houses and gardens.

Firstly, the proposed extension must respect the privacy of neighbouring properties . The following suggestions can help with this:

- Windows are expected to be located to avoid, or otherwise minimise, the overlooking of adjoining houses or gardens, particularly neighbouring windows serving habitable rooms and the more private outdoor areas;
- Overlooking may sometimes be resolved by using obscure glazing for non-habitable room windows and rooflights;
- Balconies should be avoided where they overlook adjoining properties.

Secondly, extensions must be carefully sited to avoid undue loss of daylight and sunlight to the windows and garden of the neighbouring property. A useful guide intended to ensure that extensions do not harm the outlook from adjoining dwellings, is the 45-degree code.

The 45 degree code

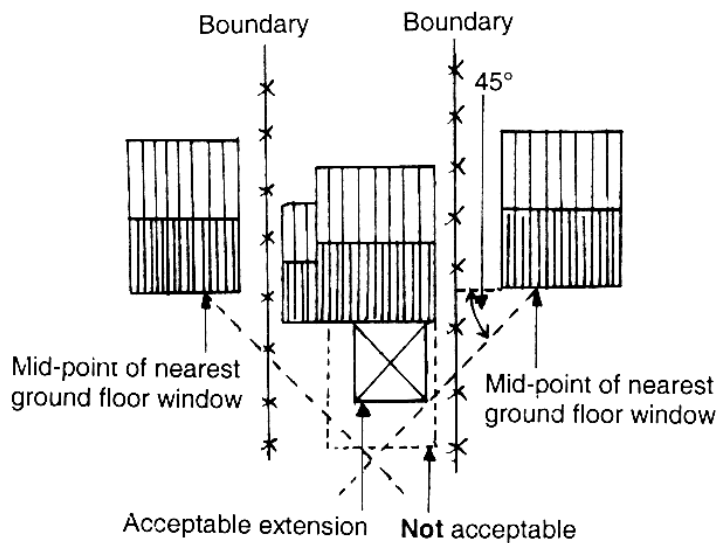
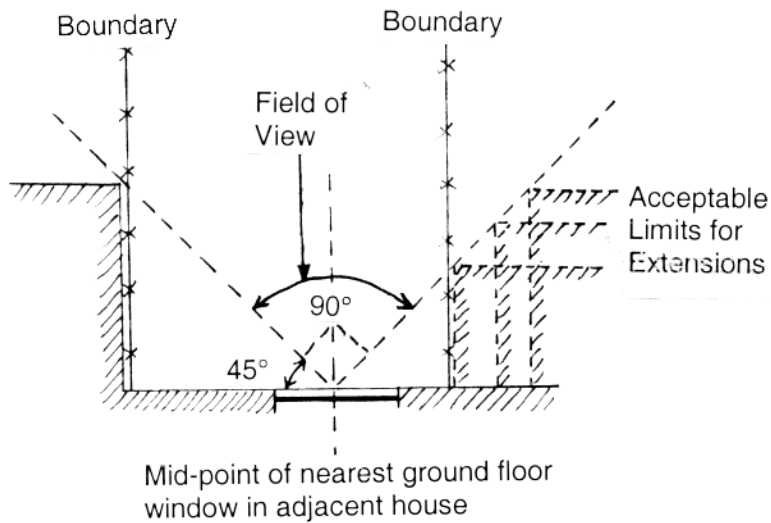
To minimise potential loss of light to neighbouring properties, this code will be applied to front and rear extensions but not at the side and not in relation to extensions directly opposite affected windows. To comply with the code a single storey extension should not cross the line(s) drawn at 45 degrees from the midpoint of the ground floor window of the closest habitable room (see definition at end*) of the neighbouring property. In the case of a two storey extension the line should be drawn from the nearest edge of the ground floor window of the closest habitable room (Figures 2a and 2b below).

*Definition: * "Habitable room" includes dining room, kitchen, lounge, study and bedrooms but excludes WC's bathrooms, utility rooms, landings and hallways.*

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Figs 2a & 2b: Application of the 45 degree code for a single storey extension



Space around dwellings

- Overdevelopment of the site will not be permitted and adequate private garden space must be retained, to include, where possible, a secluded private area;
- Extensions are expected to retain adequate parking within the curtilage of the property to meet the Council's adopted standards.

Trees and hedges

The safeguarding of existing trees and hedgerows may often be an issue in considering extensions of residential properties. Where trees and hedges must be removed to make way for an extension, you may be required to plant replacements. Traditional forms of deciduous vegetation should be used when considering replacements and quick growing species such as Leylandii will be resisted.

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Types of extensions

Front extensions

Extensions in front of dwellings are generally not favoured as they can detract from the design of what is frequently the most important and prominent elevation of the property, as well as the collective appearance of the street scene. However, porches and canopies may be an acceptable addition, providing that the rhythm of a repeating street scene, particularly evident in most terraced developments is not impaired.

Porches and canopies are a feature of some traditional dwellings and small porches may be permitted development.

Porches should be:

- simple in design and generally reflect the appearance and features of the building to which they are to be attached;
- constructed of materials sympathetic to the dwelling;
- designed with pitched roofs, either open or enclosed.

Canopies, including those of mono pitch construction are likely to be the most acceptable. (Fig 3 & 4 below).

Fig 3: Simple traditional porch

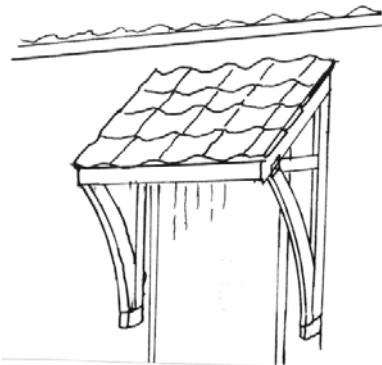


Fig 4: Enclosed porch



Side extensions

- Where the gaps between properties are a marked and important feature of the street scene, this should not be significantly compromised by an extension. An adequate and distinct separation is expected to be maintained;
- The setting back of the front elevation of an extension can contribute towards the retention of the separate identity; any projection beyond the front elevation of the property will rarely be acceptable;
- The lowering of the level of the roof ridge on the extension can also contribute to the retention of a separate identity;
- To avoid being visually obtrusive, extensions should generally be clearly subordinate to the appearance of the existing house (Fig 5a & 5b);
- Where the window of a habitable room faces a wall, the distance between the two and the arrangement of windows should be such as to ensure retention of adequate light to the window and privacy for the occupants;

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- It is important that semi-detached or detached houses do not appear to become terraced when extended at the side; for this reason two storey extensions should be set back at least one metre from the side boundary, and should also allow adequate access to the rear garden.

Sympathetic side extensions

Fig 5a

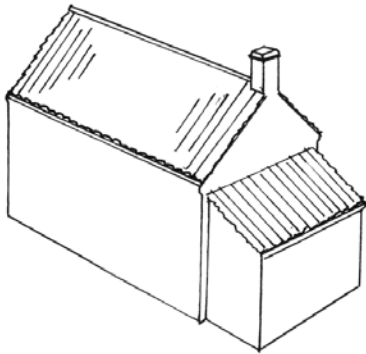
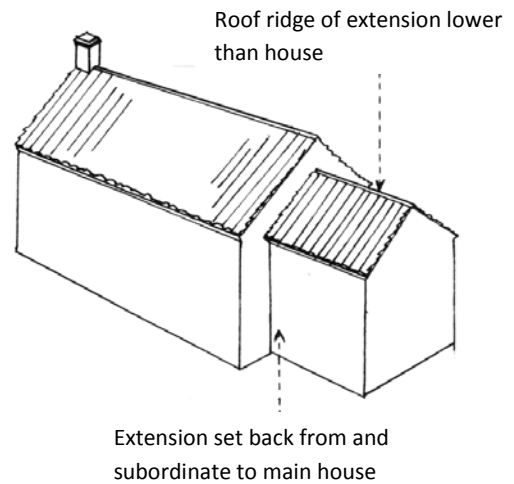


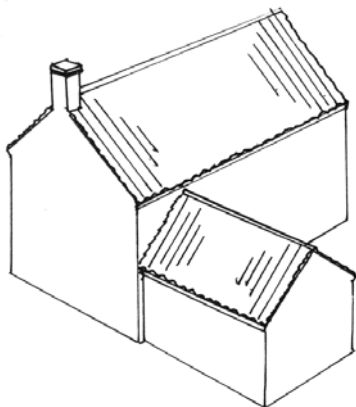
Fig 5b



Rear extensions

Rear extensions are generally preferable to side and front extensions on traditional and historic properties (Fig 6a).

Fig 6a Sympathetic rear extensions

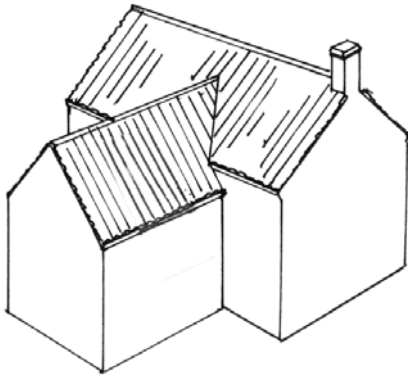


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If the plot size is large enough then a two storey extension may receive planning permission providing there is no unacceptable loss of sunlight and daylight to adjoining properties (Fig 6b).

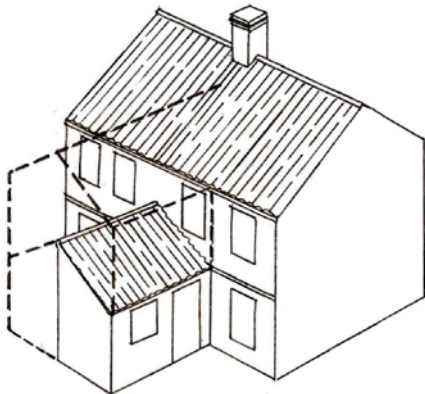
Fig 6b



On smaller properties single storey extensions at the rear should not normally extend more than 3 metres along the common boundary with an adjoining dwelling. However, much may depend on the size of the curtilage available and the topography of the site. With larger properties it may be acceptable to extend to a greater depth.

Two storey extensions to terraced and semi-detached houses require careful consideration and the 45 degree code should be applied in order to avoid overlooking and light loss. Similar extensions to adjoining properties can usually achieve a better result.

Fig 6c

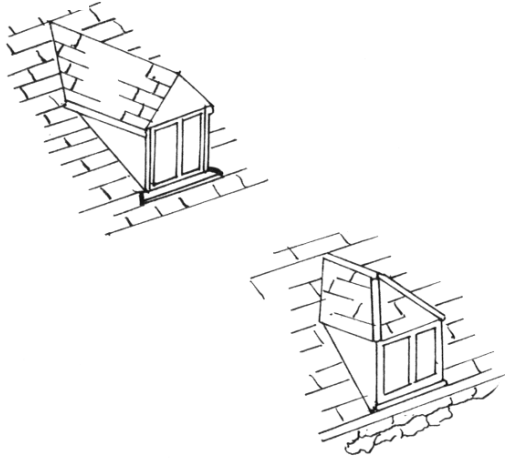


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Extensions in the roof

Fig 7



Additional space can often be created in a simple way by the conversion of lofts and roof space, if you own an older house with a steeper roof pitch of between 40 and 60 degrees. Modern estate houses with trussed rafter construction are not generally suitable for providing rooms in the roof. Careful design of dormer windows is essential to ensure that the original house roof remains dominant.

- Dormer window extensions are expected to not exceed the height of the original roof;
- Dormers to match the style of the original roof are expected to be used;
- Flat roof dormers are unsightly and can be detrimental to the appearance of the house and the neighbourhood;
- A continuous box dormer should be avoided because it can result in an unsympathetic solution which compromises the form and appearance of the dwelling;
- Smaller traditional dormer windows offer an attractive alternative even on modern houses;
- The design and appearance of dormer windows should generally be in keeping with the original house, in particular the existing fenestration, in terms of positioning, style, proportion and the use of materials;
- Overlooking from dormers is an important consideration and, as an alternative, rooflight windows may reduce possible problems of overlooking.

Access for people with disabilities

The National Planning Policy Framework promotes inclusive design (paragraph 57) and viable development (paragraphs 173 & 174). Access for people with disabilities is normally addressed through the Building Regulations, so the plans submitted with a planning application should not hinder compliance with Building Regulations.

The Government's Planning Practice Guidance (reference ID: 26-002-20140306) states that: "Good design should... enhance the quality of buildings and spaces, by considering amongst other things form and function; efficiency and effectiveness and their impact on well being..." Therefore, if a planning application for an extension states that it is intended for a person with a disability but is clearly not fit for purpose, the Council may refuse the application (even if it complies with the Building Regulations).

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Flood Risk

Extensions must have regard to the risk of flooding. In considering planning applications, the Council will apply a sequential approach that seeks to steer development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding (Flood Zone 1) and away from medium and high risk areas (Flood Zones 2 and 3). The Environment Agency has also produced statutory planning advice for developments in flood risk areas. In particular it would need to be consulted on flood defence consent requirements where development (including boundary walls etc) is within 20 metres of a main river. There is also guidance regarding extensions in flood zones 2 and 3. Further details can be viewed on Gov.uk website.

CONSERVATORIES

The siting and design of conservatories can have a marked effect upon the character of a property.

- Designs should be carefully considered, particularly if the conservatory is of a standardised or prefabricated type;
- The usual and best siting is at the rear of properties and the preferred construction is painted timber and glass superstructure on a brickwork or stone base;
- Lean-to forms are usually the most appropriate but very shallow pitched roofs should be avoided;
- In certain cases the construction of a 'sun room' (i.e. a conservatory with a solid roof) may be more appropriate.

Acknowledgement note: *Figures 1a, 1b, 3, 4, 5a, 5b, 6a, 6b, 6c & 7 in this appendix are adapted extracts from the North Norfolk Design Guide.*

FURTHER ADVICE

This guidance relates to many of the factors that may need to be taken into account in considering an extension to a dwelling. However, the contents of the guidance may not apply in their entirety or, alternatively, may not be fully comprehensive, in respect of any one particular proposed house extension. It is always advisable to discuss your proposals at an early stage with one of the Council's Planning Officers. The address is:

Development Control Section
Places Directorate
Rutland County Council
Council Offices
Catmose,
Oakham
Rutland
LE15 6HP

Telephone: 01572 758400

Email: planning@rutland.gov.uk

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BUILDING REGULATIONS

Any new building work may also require Building Regulation approval. This is to ensure that the method of construction is safe and that the various technical requirements are satisfied. You can speak to a Building Control Officer at the Council Offices.

Please note that it is also advisable to undertake the formal pre-application advice process with a Planning Officer.