

General pre-application advice and principles for household extensions and alterations

Design

The townscape of an area and general street scene is important when determining the appropriate form, size and siting of extensions (including proposals for the installation of dormer windows and other roof alterations).

The character of an area is defined by (amongst others):

- Design of buildings;
- Heights;
- Dominant building type(s);
- Level changes;
- Spaces between the buildings;
- Materials;
- Boundary treatments; and
- Trees and vegetation.

In areas where the space between houses is an important characteristic, regard should be given to these characteristics in deciding upon the appropriate size and design of the extension. Whilst there may be exceptional circumstances, in general, extensions should be in keeping with and respect the character of the area.

When considering the appropriate size and design of an extension, the following guidance should be noted:

- Extensions should complement the form and character of the existing dwelling.
- The design of the extension should respect the original whilst also being attractive in its own right, with simple and uncomplicated forms often being most appropriate.
- The scale of the extension should be appropriate to the size of the original building and should not

‘swamp’ the host dwelling and create an unbalanced composition.

- Materials matching those of the existing building or good natural materials complementing the existing should be used.
- The extension should not dominate the existing building. In most circumstances, the setting back of an extension from the frontage of the existing dwelling, and the setting down of the ridgeline of the extension is recommended to ensure the extension has a subordinate appearance to the existing building. This may be particularly important in relation to semi-detached properties where it is important to retain the symmetry of the pair. However, in some circumstances, for example where existing buildings are all of very simple form, a set-back set-down extension may not be appropriate.
- Consideration should be given to the finer details of any extension to a dwelling. Sourcing specific materials or including certain door/window styles found in the locality are two fundamental aspects to include in your plans.



Think of your neighbours - The 3 'O's

1. Overlooking

Residential extensions should not unreasonably reduce the privacy of a neighbouring house by allowing intrusive views into habitable room windows or private gardens, such as patio areas. In considering privacy issues you should take account of include:

- The number and position of the windows you are proposing;
- Window sizes;
- The use of the rooms served by windows;
- The use of obscure glazing;
- The use of non-opening windows where appropriate;
- Changes in level.

You should also give thought to existing and proposed screening provided by fences, trees and shrubs.

Windows above ground floor level cannot easily be screened and adequate distances should be allowed to boundaries to neighbouring properties. The definition for an adequate distance will be individual for each case due to the unique site-specific circumstances for each dwelling.

2. Overshadowing

Extensions to dwellings should be carefully sited to prevent any significant loss of daylight or sunlight to the main windows and garden areas of neighbouring dwellings. Particular attention should be paid to the proximity of the extension to the side boundaries of the site and, therefore, to neighbouring properties. As a general rule of thumb, the larger the extension, the further it should be set away from the boundary to neighbouring properties.

3. Overbearing impact/loss of outlook

This particularly applies to two-storey extensions, although it may be an issue to consider with single storey extensions sited very close to the boundary of neighbouring properties. The relationship between the first floor element of the extension and the side boundaries to neighbouring properties is of importance when assessing whether a proposal is over dominant, overbearing or impacting on a neighbour's

outlook; however it should be noted that there is no right to a view across a neighbour's property.

To prevent overbearing/loss of outlook and overshadowing impacts to neighbouring properties, two-storey extensions will not normally be allowed to protrude beyond a 45° line (drawn horizontally) from the nearest window of a neighbour.

Experience shows that proposals that have been discussed with neighbours prior to the submission of an application go through the application process more smoothly, **YOU ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSAL WITH NEIGHBOURS BEFORE FINALISING THE PROPOSAL AND SUBMITTING ANY APPLICATION.**



Heritage Assets: Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

Heritage assets play a key role in the identity, distinctiveness and character of Huntingdonshire. Protecting and/or enhancing their appearance and surroundings is essential, but considerate development proposals that compliment the area have a role to play in their future enjoyment and use. We recommend engaging a design team with specialist skills when undertaking a project that concerns a Listed Building as the Council has specific duties to attend to when assessing proposals of this nature, as expressed in Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

"In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority...shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses"

And Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

“With respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area...special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”.

For works that affect a listed building, Listed Building Consent (LBC) as well as planning permission are likely to be required. LBC is required for works that affect the interior as well as the exterior of a listed building.

Trees

Where there are trees on a property or on land adjacent to it that could influence or be affected by the development (including street trees), these should be considered. As part of an application, information will be required on which trees are to be lost/retained, any works to trees and on the means of protecting trees during construction works.



Parking Provision and Highway Safety

There should normally be provision for at least two off street car parking spaces per dwelling, although it can be fewer in some areas. In all cases, a clear justification for the level of provision proposed should be provided. Sufficient width and length should be allowed for the opening of car doors and use of garage doors. In general, where vehicular access into a site is accessed from an 'A' or 'B' classified road, or for any site relating to industry, provision for a turning area should also be included to allow vehicles to leave the site in a forward gear. It should however be noted that any development proposed shall be considered on a case by case basis with regard to parking provision and highway safety.



Flood Risk

In areas at risk to flooding, a planning application for an extension should be accompanied by flood mitigation measures which either confirm that: the floor levels of the proposed development will be set no lower than existing levels AND flood proofing of the proposed development has been incorporated; or floor levels within the extension will be set 300mm above the known or modelled 1 in 100 annual probability river flood (1%). A tick box form to indicate which measures are proposed is available on the Planning Forms page on the Council's website.

Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside

To help retain the intrinsic rural character and beauty of the countryside, in addition to all the matters set out above, an extension to a dwelling in the countryside should not result in a significant increase in the height or massing of the original dwelling or significantly increase its impact on the surrounding countryside.

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The Planning Process - Household Extensions

