

HOUSE EXTENSIONS DESIGN GUIDE

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING
DOCUMENT

JUNE 2019

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ONE

PURPOSE OF THIS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

- 1.1** Extending a home to suit a family's present and future needs can prove to be a more economic and satisfactory solution than moving to a new house. In seeking to meet these needs care must be taken to ensure the extension is designed and built well. Extensions must not have an adverse effect on the house itself, the immediate neighbours or the quality of a streetscape and neighbourhood.
- 1.2** There may be ways to achieve the space required through internal changes which removes the need and expense of an extension. To achieve this good professional advice should be sought from the start of any plans to extend.
- 1.3** There may not always be scope for a house to be extended. For example, a house on a small plot may not have sufficient space around it to accommodate an extension without resulting in an unacceptable impact on the size of private amenity space or extent of overlooking or overshadowing of neighbouring properties.
- 1.4** The borough has a variety of residential areas and types hence this guidance does not and cannot cover every possible scenario. It explains what the council will take into account when judging whether an application is acceptable or not. In some instances there may be particular reasons that allow for a departure from this context or where an innovative design solution is put forward.
- 1.5** The document relates to extensions to residential properties, although the principles should still apply to development of non-residential properties found in residential areas.

DO YOU NEED PLANNING PERMISSION?

- 1.6** Some extensions do not require planning permission. This is known as 'Permitted Development.' However, there are certain types of permitted development that require 'prior approval' from the council before work can start. This is explained in more detail through the "Permitted development rights for householders: technical guidance document" available on the www.gov.uk website.
- 1.7** However, the regulations relating to permitted development are complex. To avoid any confusion as to whether a house benefits from such rights it is recommended that the form, "Do you Require Planning Permission or Building Regulation Consent for Building Works at Your Home?" is completed and submitted to the council to enquire whether planning permission is required.
- 1.8** This form as well as additional information on the planning application process is available from the council's offices or from the planning section of the council's website under the section "Do you need planning permission" (www.wigan.gov.uk).
- 1.9** Wigan Council also runs a pre-application advice service. By discussing your project with us before you apply for planning permission, we can help you put together a successful application that meets all requirements and avoids delays. Further details can be found on our website at <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Planning-and-Building-Control/Planning/Pre-application-advice.aspx>.

AIMS OF THIS GUIDE

1.10 The main aims of the guide are to:

- Expand on planning policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and the Wigan Local Plan.
- Raise awareness of the value of good design and how it can benefit a home that is being extended, protect the residential amenity of neighbouring houses and enhance the local

built environment.

- Improve the quality of submissions for planning approval, in order to achieve quicker decisions and better quality development.

STATUS OF THE GUIDE

1.11 This guide will have the status of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

1.12 The Council produces other Supplementary Planning Documents which are available online on the Councils website.

IMPORTANT:

This guidance should be read as a whole.
Complying with one part of it does not necessarily mean you will comply with it all.

TWO

GENERAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

2.1 The following general design guidelines should be considered before a householder development is proposed:

- Siting
- Built form and scale
- Architectural details
- Position of windows and doors
- Materials and finishes
- Alterations to assist people with disabilities
- Boundary treatments, trees and landscape schemes

SITING

2.2 Any proposed householder development should be positioned so that it does not dominate the street scene (figure 1). It must instead complement the existing house and should not be dominant or overbearing to neighbouring properties.

2.3 New extensions should respect building lines and the pattern of buildings and spaces in a street.

2.4 In some instances, it may not be possible to design an acceptable extension due to the sensitivity of the site, limited space, or the relationship with neighbouring houses.



Figure 1 Extensions should be subordinate and positioned so they do not dominate the street scene.

BUILT FORM AND SCALE

2.5 The form and scale of the extension should be subordinate to the existing buildings.

the shape and massing of a building. Any proposed extension should have a roof that enhances the character of the existing building (figure 2). This means that flat roofs on two storey extensions will usually be unacceptable where they are visible from the street. Flat roofs are more likely to be acceptable on single storey extensions.

2.6 The roof is a key feature that helps define

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

2.7 The architectural detailing found on a residential house contributes to its individual character and contributes to the appearance of the street scene. Therefore, a householder development should, where appropriate, reflect any architectural detailing on the existing building as they are important features that define character. Such detailing could include plinths and string courses, sills and lintels, decorative brickwork and quoins, barge boards and cornices, fascias and/or decorative tiling (figure 3).

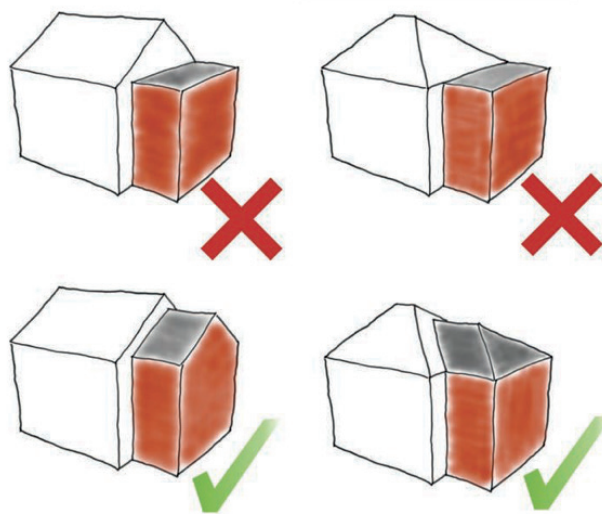


Figure 2
Extensions should have a roof form that enhance the character of the original building

2.8 Innovative or interesting designs of good architectural merit which address the objectives of the guidance and enhance the design and character of the building are encouraged.

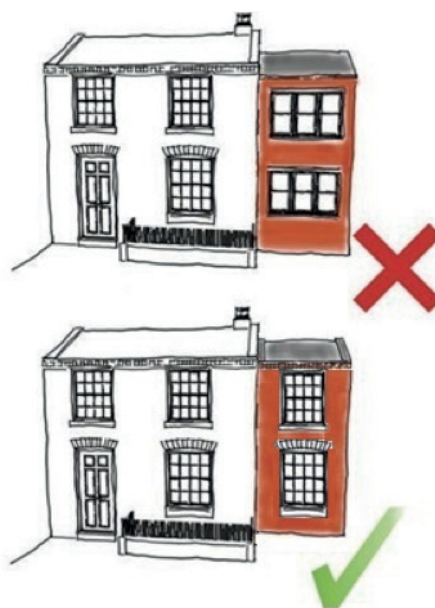
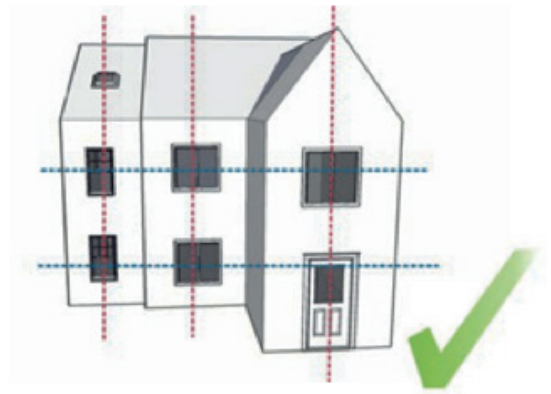


Figure 3
Key architectural features should be replicated on house extensions.

POSITION OF WINDOWS AND DOORS

2.9 When introducing new window openings (including rooflights) or doors, careful attention must be given to the sizes, proportions and styles, as well as the internal dimension of the proposed openings and the materials used. In general, all windows or doors should be the same or complementary to the existing windows or doors. The positioning of windows or doors within an elevation should 'line up' with existing openings (figure 4).



2.10 The installation of new openings should not compromise a neighbour's residential privacy in terms of overlooking. Therefore, habitable room windows, roof terraces, balconies (including Juliet balconies) that overlook or compromise residential privacy

will not be permitted (figure 5). The use of obscure glazing to avoid overlooking may be permitted when used in non-habitable rooms but is unlikely to be acceptable for a primary window in a habitable room (e.g. a bedroom).



Figure 5
Overlooking must be avoided

MATERIALS AND FINISHES

2.11 To ensure that an extension does not detract from the appearance of a house and the character of the local area, it should be constructed from building materials that match or complement the main building.

2.12 Many older buildings use a red brick type called 'common brick.' These bricks naturally change colour due to weathering and age. When the brick is cleaned the original mix of red shades is restored. It is good practice to use a brick type that complements the original brick colour and not the weathered brickwork.

2.13 When trying to match stone or brick it is important that care is taken with regard to the bonding pattern, the colour of the mortar and pointing method on an extension.

2.14 Roofs are a visually significant part of any building and as such any extensions should match roof materials to the original house. This is particularly important where traditional materials are used such as slate or stone.

2.15 In some instances, materials and finishes that are different to the original property may be acceptable where they complement the original materials and provide an interesting contrast.

ALTERATIONS TO ASSIST PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

2.16 A house may need to be altered to make it possible for people with disabilities and older people to remain living there.

2.17 A level or ramped approach may be needed to a widened front door or the ground floor may need to be extended to enable it to accommodate a bedroom or bathroom. However, a resident having a disability will not automatically mean that a scheme can breach guidelines within this document.

2.18 In such cases the applicant will need to produce a case for special circumstances. It will have to be shown that what is proposed is the best design to meet the specific requirements of the people living there and ensure there is no negative effect to the amenity of the area.

BOUNDARY TREATMENTS, TREES AND LANDSCAPE SCHEMES

2.19 Although some boundary and landscape treatments may not require planning permission, the following design issues and guidelines should be taken into consideration.

2.20 Boundary treatments such as gates, walls and fences, as well as trees and vegetation help to define private from public areas, whilst landscape schemes can help to integrate extensions into their context. They should be considered as an integral part of the design when drawing up a proposal and should not be used simply to counter the effect of a scheme that would either be out of scale or poorly designed.

2.21 A boundary may already consist of hedges and/or screening plants and trees. Such distinctive landscape features can help an extension blend in more readily than new fences or walls. Therefore, where possible they should be retained and incorporated into any new boundary treatment.

2.22 Where new boundary treatments are proposed they should:

- Be of an appropriate scale and be constructed from building materials and styles that match or complement the street scene and local built environment.
- Respect visibility splays where they abut the highway, by not being over one metre in height to ensure the safety of highway users.
- Still allow ground floor windows to overlook the street to assist with natural surveillance.
- Not affect the integrity of the original design of an open plan estate.

2.23 Where possible proposed extensions should be located to avoid any detrimental impact upon existing trees. This may be achieved by ensuring an acceptable distance between existing trees and the proposed extension and/or adopting construction methods that reduce the potential impact on trees. Planning applications that are likely to impact upon trees should be accompanied by a Tree Constraints Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement. Additional controls apply if trees are protected through a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or if the property is located in a Conservation Area. Further guidance is available on the Council's website or via the pre-application service.

2.24 Open areas of land in residential areas are important where their function is to soften the street scene and provide an amenity function. These are often privately owned land. A planning application for change of use would be required to incorporate open space areas into gardens.

THREE

COMMON FORMS OF EXTENSION

3.1 The following section gives design advice on specific types of house extensions.

- Rear extensions
- Side extensions
- Corner plots
- Roof extensions
- Garages, car parking and other outbuildings

3.2 This document makes reference to “habitable rooms”, this term means “any room used or intended to be used for sleeping, living or eating purposes – this excludes pantries, kitchens without dining areas, bathrooms, toilets, landings, hallways, utility rooms or similar spaces.

IMPORTANT:

In general, any extension should not be dominant or overbearing to either the host property or neighbouring properties.

REAR EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS (INCLUDING CONSERVATORIES)

3.3 Development to the rear of a house is often the most practical way to increase the size of a dwelling and its living space. Rear extensions often have little or no impact on the street scene but can have an adverse effect on the character of the area in general and the amenity of a neighbouring house.

3.4 This character can be affected through:

- overshadowing
- over dominance
- loss of privacy
- loss of daylight and sunlight
- inappropriate materials
- inappropriate architectural styles

3.5 It is important that a rear extension has a roof form that respects the character and appearance of the area it is located in. Flat roof extensions will normally be acceptable in enclosed private spaces but may not be acceptable where they are visible from public spaces.

3.6 Private garden space should allow for outdoor recreational activities. The council will resist proposals that would result in a disproportionate loss of usable back garden or yard space.

3.7 If your rear extension results in your rear garden becoming unusable due to lack of space, enclosure of a side garden to replace it would generally be unacceptable if it is likely to have adverse impact on building line or street scene.

SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSIONS

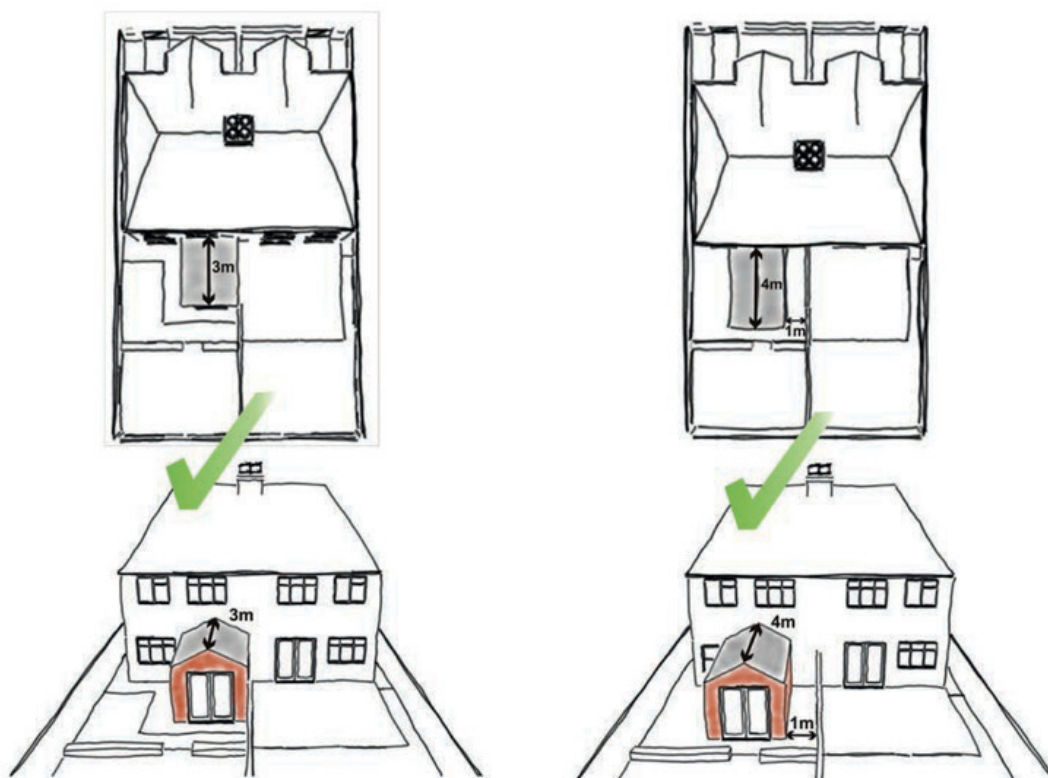


Figure 6
A single storey extension should not project more than 3m unless it is set off the boundary by a distance proportional to its extra length.

3.8 To address the impact on amenity of an adjacent house, a single storey extension should not project along a common boundary by more than 3 metres unless it is set off the boundary by a distance proportional to its extra length (figure 6).

3.9 Longer extensions may be acceptable subject to other considerations such as position relative to length of garden, position of windows, existing boundary details, existing extensions on neighbouring properties and

general amenity effects on neighbouring properties.

3.10 If your house is terraced or semi-detached it may be worth speaking to your neighbours about a joint extension as this can often be mutually beneficial and address many of the issues outlined above. In such cases a joint application should be made.

TWO STOREY REAR EXTENSIONS

3.11 A two storey extension is likely to have a greater impact on residential amenity. For this reason the council will use the “45 degree rule” as a starting point for its considerations. The rule is applied by drawing a line at 45 degrees from the mid-point of the nearest window on a ground-floor habitable room on an adjoining building. If the line cuts through any part of the proposed development then the extension is likely to be too large and should be reduced in size (figure 7).

3.12 All extensions will be assessed on whether they are:

- overbearing due to length
- overbearing due to height
- dominant to the length of the boundary
- detrimental to the amount of usable garden space

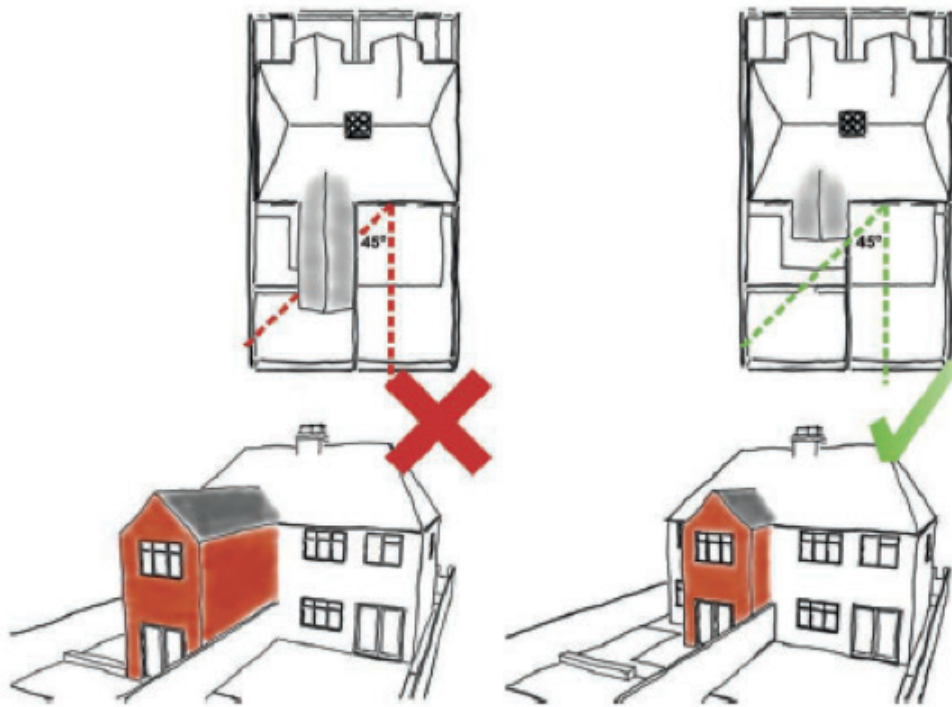


Figure 7
A two storey extension should comply with the 45 degree rule

3.13 Only in very exceptional circumstances will development that fails to comply with these requirements be considered acceptable. In such instances the council will expect the applicant to demonstrate that there will be no unacceptable adverse impact on neighbouring residential amenity.

3.14 It is important that the planning and design of house extensions retains adequate levels of privacy and amenity. To achieve this, a minimum separation distance of 7 metres must be retained between any part of an extension containing new windows of a habitable room at first floor or above and any facing boundary.

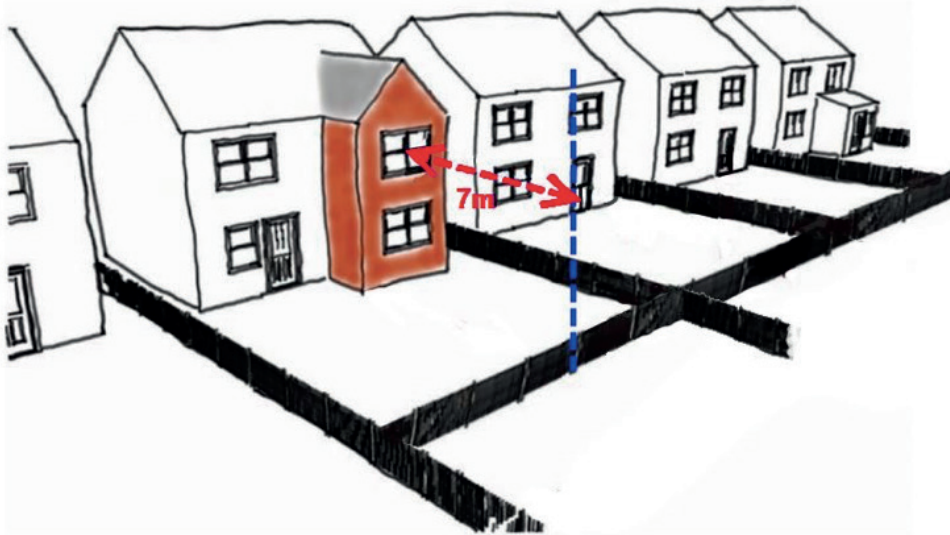


Figure 8
A separation distance of at least 7 metres between a first-floor habitable room and the facing boundary must be achieved

3.15 If a rear house extension will face an elevation of a neighbouring house with windows of habitable rooms, there should be a minimum distance of 17.5 metres between the extension and the original elevation of the neighbouring house. (Figure 9).

3.17 A minimum of 14 metres will be required between two storey extensions that face each other where they contain windows of habitable rooms.

3.16 For a house extension with habitable rooms facing a blank elevation or one with windows of non-habitable rooms, an interface distance of no less than 12.2 metres should be observed (Figure 10)."

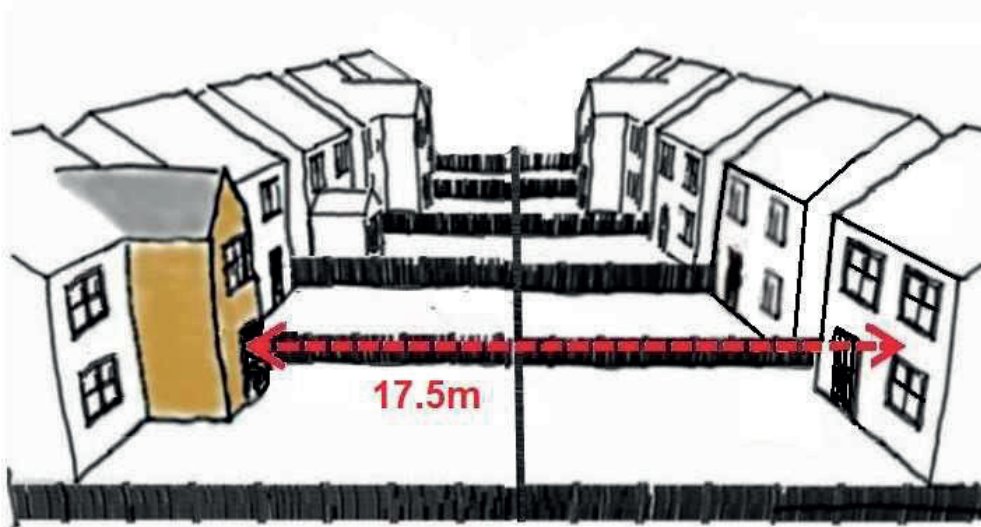


Figure 9
An interface distance of no less than 17.5 metres should be maintained between the proposed extension with a window of a habitable room and the original elevations containing the window of a habitable room.

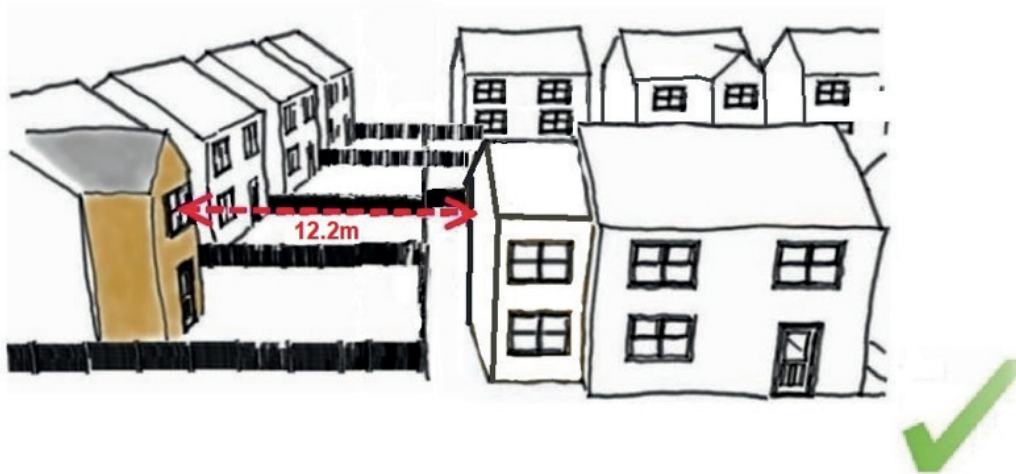


Figure 10
A distance of 12.2m should be observed if an extension faces a blank elevation or one with windows of non-habitable rooms.



Figure 11
Although the building may meet minimum distances, building up to the rear boundary of a neighbouring property would generally not be acceptable due to the overall impact on that property.

3.18 These distances may be relaxed where the design or orientation is such that the amenity of a neighbouring property is not compromised.

3.19 Alternatively, these distances may be increased if there is a change in levels, which would result in an adverse effect on the privacy and amenity of a neighbouring property. For every additional 0.5m increase in height difference between properties we would add 1.5m to the expected distance between elevations (Figure 11).

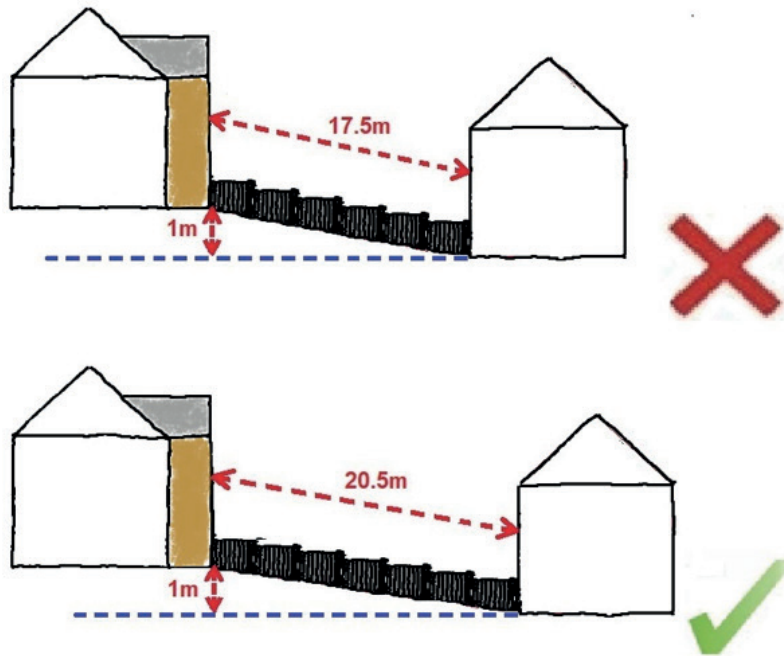


Figure 12
In this example a 1m increase in height requires that 3m must be added to the minimum interface distance.

SIDE EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS

- 3.20** Side extensions not only impact on the setting of a house but can also have an impact on the character and appearance of the street scene. The council will seek to prevent the loss of spaces between buildings where the spaces are important in defining the character of the street scene, and where their loss would give the impression of a continuous built form. It is therefore essential that side extensions must be well designed, with building materials and styles that match or complement the original house.
- 3.21** A side extension should not result in the unacceptable loss of existing off-street car parking. This would equate to one parking space for houses with up to 3 bedrooms and two parking spaces for houses with 4 or more bedrooms. A parking space would be 5m by 3m or 6m by 3m if in front of a garage.
- 3.22** The removal of a front boundary wall or hedge and the development of the front garden into a forecourt for parking will be resisted where it would have an adverse impact on visual amenity or the character of the street scene, or where it may cause localised flooding. Planning permission will be required for the removal of a front boundary treatment where it is to facilitate the creation of a vehicular access to the property from a classified road. Thought should be given to appropriate boundary treatments when designing extensions.
- 3.23** Bins can have an adverse impact on the appearance and amenity of a neighbourhood, hence they should be stored to the rear or side of a house. An extension to a house should not compromise the ability to store bins to the rear or the side of the house. A side extension must ensure that residents can continue to move their bins from the back to the front of the house and vice versa, without the need for them to pass through rooms in the house.
- 3.24** Therefore, the council will seek to retain a minimum of 800 millimetres from an extension to a side boundary, unless it is demonstrated that there is an alternative access to a screened bin storage facility. The 800 millimetre space should be clear of any obstacles such as vegetation, gate posts, fence posts, down pipes, etc and the council will expect the applicant to submit plans showing this.
- 3.25** In exceptional circumstances, bin facilities may have to be stored to the front of a house. In such cases a well designed and sited bin store will be sought, to satisfy existing and future bin provision.

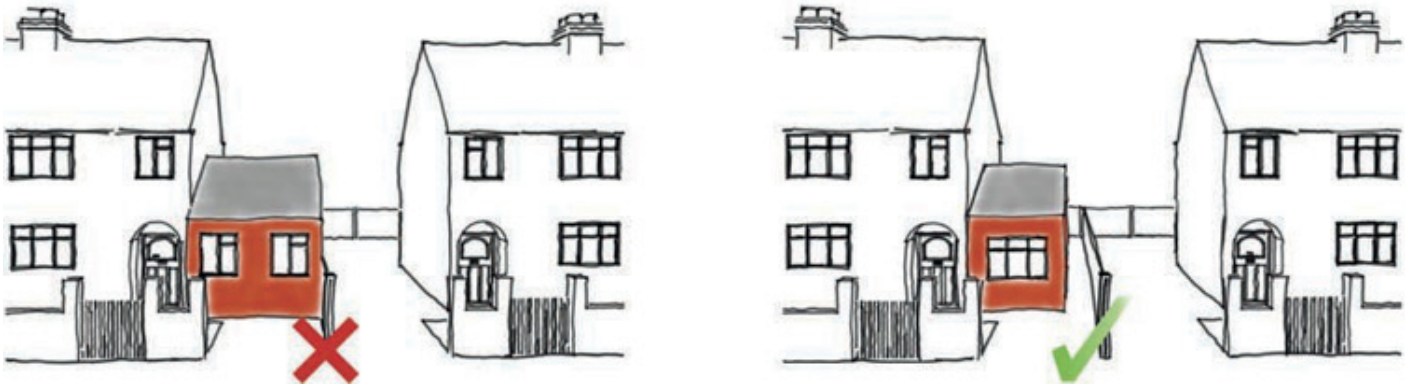


Figure 13
An 800 millimetre space should be retained between a side extension and the boundary

TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSIONS

3.26 When two neighbours decide to extend at two storey level over their driveways up to the common boundary a 'terracing effect' can happen. The result is that the two houses lose their 'semi-detached' or 'detached' appearance and appear as terrace houses. This can adversely affect the appearance of the street scene and the character of the area. To avoid this 'terrace effect,' a side extension should be stepped in from the boundary by 800 millimetres.

To avoid the appearance of terracing the following offsets will be required:

- Where the ground floor extension is flush with the original property the first floor extension should be set back by 2 metres.
- Alternatively, both ground and first floor should be set back by 1 metre.

3.27 When determining applications we will seek a design that will allow a neighbouring property a similar extension without causing a terracing effect.

3.28 All side extensions should have a lower roofline than the original building. The style of the roof of the original building should be reflected in the roof of the extension, e.g. a hipped roof property should have a hipped roof extension.

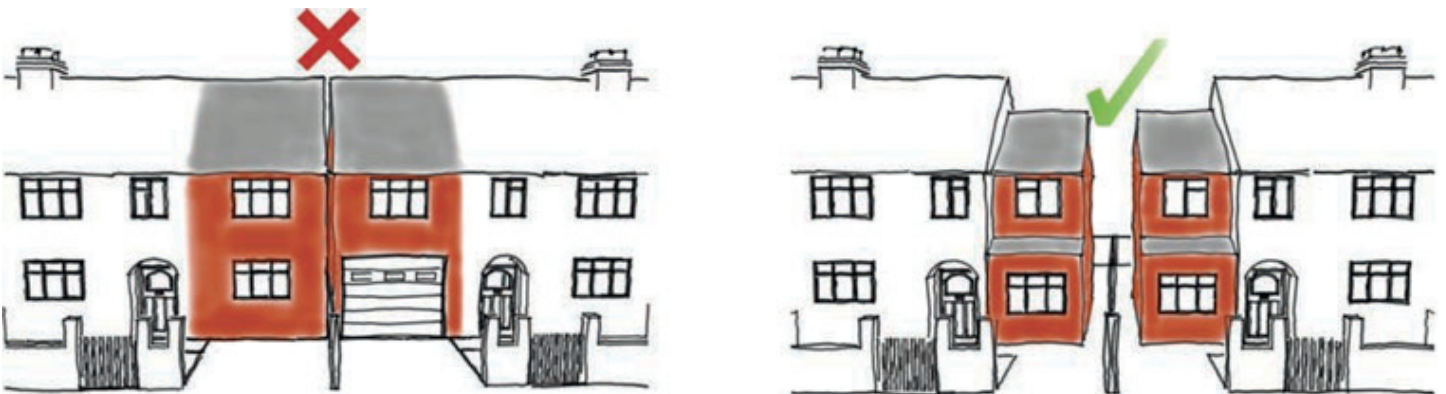


Figure 14
Side extensions should be set back and set in to avoid the 'terrace effect'

3.29 Where an extension exceeds two storeys, or includes dormer windows within the roof slope, it will be necessary for a bespoke approach to be adopted, having regard to the particular design of the house and the character of the area. Therefore, in exceptional circumstances

the above guidelines may be relaxed, but the principle of avoiding the 'terrace effect' still applies.

IMPORTANT:

Householders should consider any potential access issues for the rear of their property before extending. Poorly planned extensions can lead to rear gardens becoming 'landlocked' and may impact on future maintenance, repair and development.

CORNER PLOTS

- 3.30** Particular consideration should be given to the design and siting of either a single storey or two storey extension on a corner plot due to its visual prominence in the built environment. Blank gables will not generally be acceptable.
- 3.31** A corner plot extension must not encroach beyond established building lines on either street as it may have an adverse impact on the character of the local area. The building line is the line of the main elevations of the houses.
- 3.32** A corner plot extension should not create undesirable pinch points or obscure visibility from an entrance to a side road that would harm highway safety.

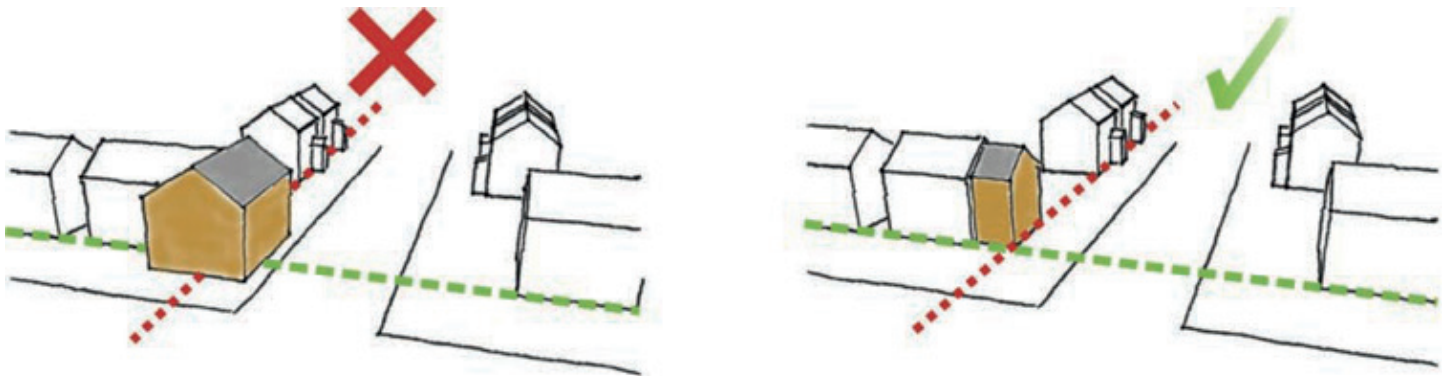


Figure 15
Development should not dominate the street corner

FRONT EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS

- 3.33** Front elevations are the most important components in defining the character and appearance of a street scene. Any extension proposed to the front of a house, especially those that project forward of an established building line, should be designed to make a positive contribution to improving the character and appearance of the street scene.
- 3.34** Front extensions that have an adverse effect on residential amenity or a detrimental effect on highway safety will not be acceptable.
- 3.35** Streets are often characterised by a common design based upon the repetition of an architectural style and/or a setting which establishes a distinctive building rhythm. Unless a front extension is small enough to be absorbed within the design of the building and the street scene as a whole it will rarely be visually acceptable as it will interrupt this rhythm and have a detrimental impact on the character of the street.
- 3.36** The council will take into consideration any significant loss of garden space or boundary treatment adjacent to the highway as it may have an adverse effect on the open setting and character of the built environment. In line with parking standards the council will take into consideration any loss of space for parking as it may increase demands for more on-street parking.



Figure 16
Front extensions should be small in scale and not harm the character of the street scene

3.37 Some porches can be developed under the General Permitted Development Order. However, any projection to a house such as a porch, canopy or bay window should have building materials, styles and a roof pitch that complement the original design of the building.

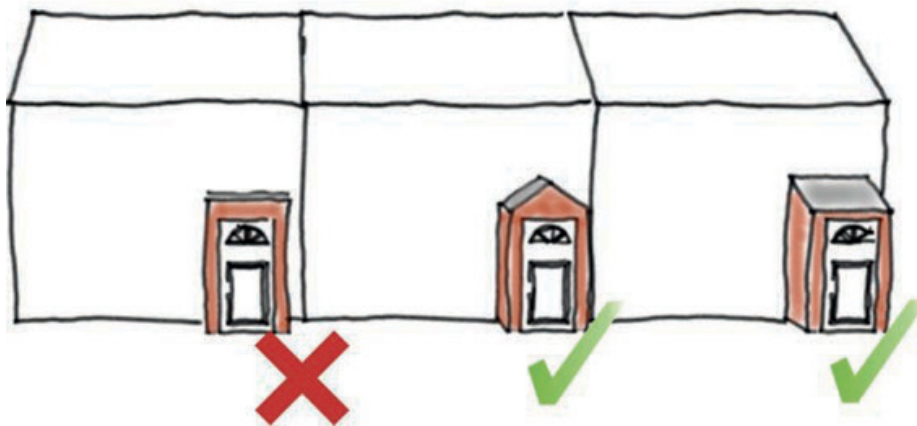


Figure 17
A porch should be small in scale and have a pitched roof.

ROOF EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS

- 3.38** Roof extensions or alterations can allow residents to use the attic space effectively. However, the potential implications of such extensions or alterations on the built environment must be considered carefully, especially if the proposal is likely to introduce a new building feature to a local area.
- 3.39** The use of roof lights and dormers can have serious amenity implications in terms of overlooking and loss of privacy to adjacent houses. Thus, this impact will be taken into consideration when assessing proposals involving dormer windows or rooflights.
- 3.40** Proposals for altering either the eaves or the ridge of the roof should be treated with caution as such a transformation could have a significant effect on the character of a street scene. This is especially true where there is a clear consistent roof line or distinctive roof form for a group of houses.
- 3.41** A dormer extension should be of a scale that is in-keeping with the original property. One that is large in scale and dominates the roofscape will be unacceptable. The design of the dormer should be subordinate to the main roof structure and limit the impact on the roof plane.
-



Figure 18
A dormer should be subordinate to the main roof.

- 3.42** Roofs with shallow pitches may be unable to accommodate dormer windows effectively, due to insufficient head height, and the required new, deeper floor structure. It is unacceptable for a dormer to be too close to the ridgeline.
- 3.43** The architectural style and building materials of a dormer extension should complement the original residential house. A dormer extension that has a small window opening with either a gabled or hipped roof form is more appropriate than a dormer extension that has a large window opening and a flat roof form, unless these help define the character of the area.
- 3.44** A dormer extension should not have a detrimental impact on the balance of the building. For instance, a dormer on one half of a pair of semi-detached bungalows may not be acceptable if it will unbalance the pair. Also a window opening in the dormer should be positioned so that it is in line with the window and door openings on the existing house.



Figure 19
Dormers should be designed so that they fit comfortably within the roof of the building

3.45 Roof lights can be used to allow natural light into a roof space without the need to significantly alter the scale or form of a residential house however they can affect the appearance of a building and subsequently the street scene. They should be sensitively sited and should be of a 'low profile' type to reduce their impact on the appearance of the roof and the general street scene. They should also be small in scale and located in line with other window and door openings.

3.46 These principles for rooflights would also apply for solar panels.

3.47 Chimneys contribute to the character of a building and establish visually interesting roofscapes. Where chimney pots and stacks are important features in helping to define a roofscape, they should be retained or appropriately replaced when extensions and alterations are proposed.



Figure 20
Rooflights should be small in scale and in line with other window and door openings

GARAGES, OTHER OUTBUILDINGS AND CAR PARKING

- 3.48** Proposals for the development of a garage or outbuilding, or the conversion of a garage must not affect the character and appearance of the street scene. They must also complement the original house in terms of building materials, design, scale and form (including roof form).
- 3.49** Garages and outbuildings should be sited in such a way that the street scene and neighbouring houses are not adversely effected in terms of obtrusiveness, overlooking and overshadowing. Therefore, garages and outbuildings should be of an appropriate scale and sited behind established building lines to avoid any adverse affect on the street scene.
- 3.50** Roof heights should be kept to a functional minimum, particularly when located close to a common boundary.
- 3.51** A garage should be a minimum distance of 6 metres from the back of the footpath or service strip to allow for a vehicle to be parked in front of the garage. This also ensures that a garage door is able to be opened without having an effect on users of the highway. It also ensures access around the car is maintained and rooms on the ground floor do not suffer from either the loss of daylight/outlook or from excessive vehicle fumes.
- 3.52** Garage doors with either roller shutters or remote control openings do not justify a reduction in the length of a driveway. If gates are to be provided they should not open out onto the pavement hence the forecourt must be deep enough to allow them to be opened and closed inwards when a vehicle is parked.

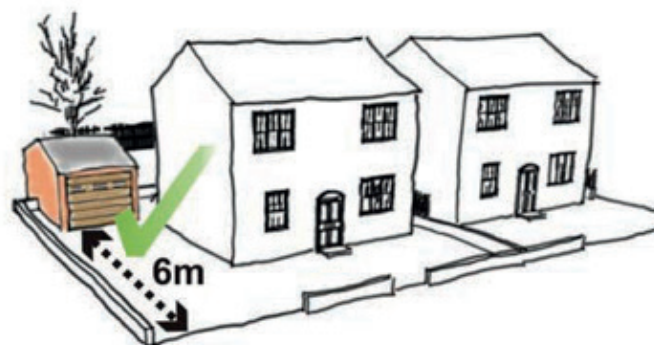


Figure 21
A garage or outbuilding should be set behind the building line

FOUR

LISTED BUILDINGS, CONSERVATION AREAS AND ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

- 4.1** More stringent planning legislation and policies will apply to a statutory listed building; or when a site is within or effects a Conservation Area. In addition where an Article 4 Direction has been made certain permitted development rights may have been withdrawn. These are explained briefly below and require specific consideration when preparing proposals. In some instances this may mean the owners aspirations are not achievable. Personal circumstances and need is not acceptable as reasoned justification for inappropriate changes.

HERITAGE ASSETS

- 4.2** The borough has a substantial number of listed buildings and conservation areas. The council has a statutory obligation to sustain and enhance these heritage assets.
- 4.3** In addition to satisfying the principles set out in this guide it is important that development affecting heritage asset(s) must also satisfy national and local planning policy and guidance relating to heritage assets.
- 4.4** Listed Building Consent will be required if you are proposing works to listed buildings including, carrying out alterations, extensions or conversions. Furthermore, Listed Building Consent applications must include a Heritage Statement justifying the proposals and impact on the significance of the heritage asset.
- 4.5** The council encourages the use of traditional and historic materials. Typical examples that are not normally acceptable include the replacement of traditional wooden sash windows with replacement uPVC windows and the replacement of traditional slate or stone roof tiles with man-made substitutes.
- 4.6** The council will support a contemporary design proposal where it would not detract from or harm the special character and appearance of the heritage asset. A high quality contemporary design may be a more appropriate solution than a pastiche design.
- 4.7** The council will always seek to protect original historic and architectural features of listed buildings and their settings. The council will not usually permit development where there is a loss of key physical and natural features that contribute towards the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, such as walls, railings, trees and spaces between the buildings.

ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

- 4.8** In certain cases where it is felt necessary to exercise a greater degree of control, the council can bring additional work under its control by implementing an Article 4 Direction. This means that certain permitted development rights are removed and planning permission will be required for works, which previously were allowed under the General Permitted Development Order.
- 4.9** Areas that have to accord with Article 4 Directions are listed under the planning section of the council's website (www.wigan.gov.uk).
- 4.10** An Article 4 Direction does not prevent you from altering or repairing your home. It is a method of ensuring that works are carried out which are sympathetic to the appearance of the building and the character of the area. It also prevents the loss and the encouragement of traditional features.