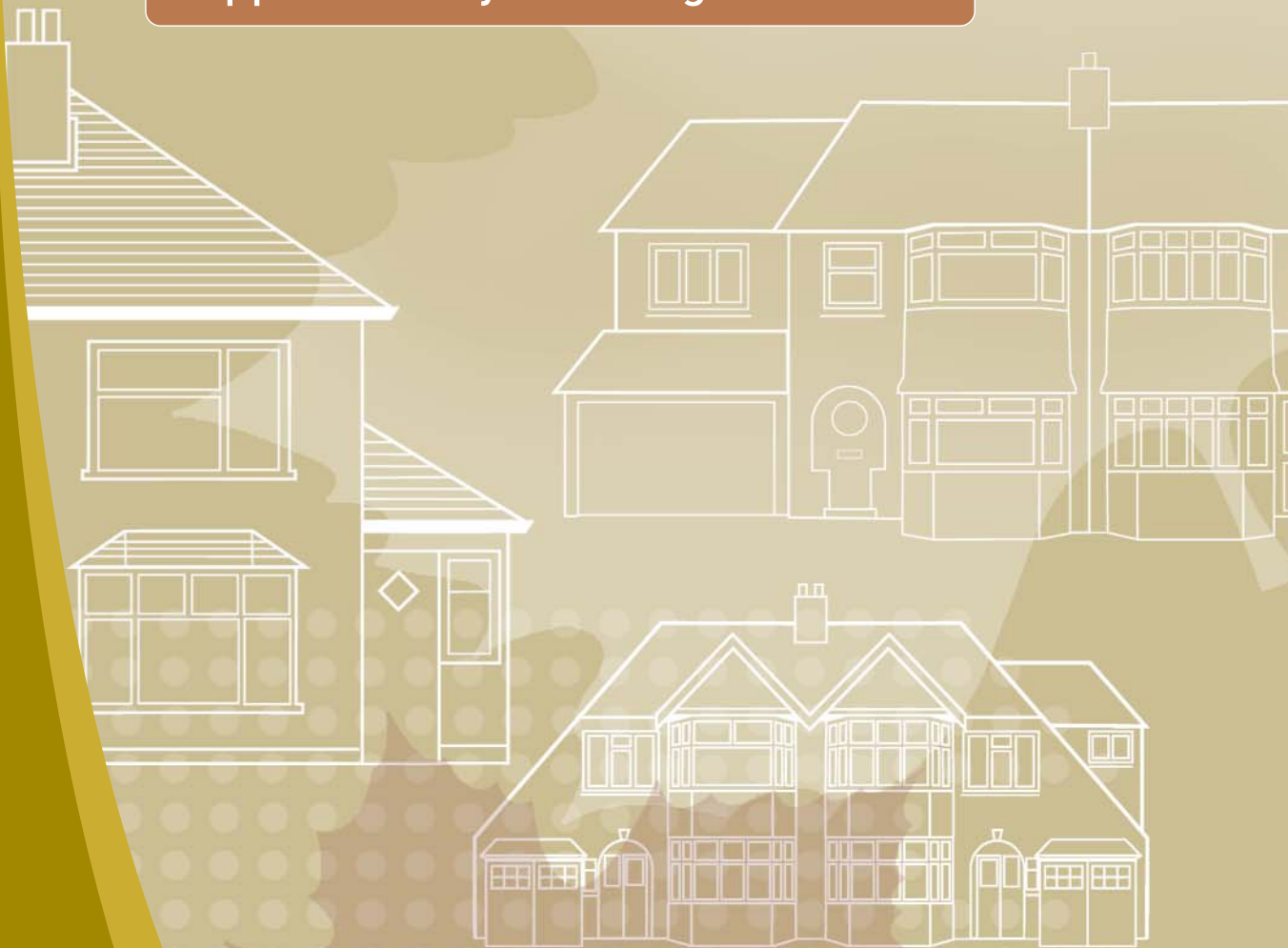




**Solihull**  
METROPOLITAN  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# House Extension Guidelines

Supplementary Planning Document



# House Extension Guidelines

February 2010

## Supplementary Planning Document

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# House Extension Guidelines

## Introduction

PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development and the Solihull UDP advises that good design is a key element in achieving sustainable development that is of high quality. This guidance also seeks to promote and reinforce local distinctiveness based on an assessment of the character of the surrounding built environment.

The House Extension Guidelines have been reviewed in light of Proposal ENV2/2 - Protection and Enhancement of Amenity of the Solihull UDP. The guidelines offer advice for householders and professionals on the main principles of extending a dwelling, without unduly affecting neighbours and respecting the character of the area and existing property. The advice outlines the main considerations taken into account by the Council when assessing applications for extensions. Due to the diversity of dwelling types and styles throughout the Borough, it is neither possible nor desirable to include every eventuality. However, general principles can be applied in the majority of cases.

The house extension guidelines have been compiled in accordance with guidance set out in Planning Policy Statement 12: Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities Through Local Spatial Planning and therefore carries significant weight in the determination of householder planning applications.

# Permitted development rights

Permitted Development rights are afforded to most households to enable owners to carry out certain works without planning permission. It is important to check with Planning Services to ensure your property has these rights before carrying out any of the work detailed below. The contact details for Planning Services are given on page 21.

Many of the works described here and throughout this booklet may require Building Regulations approval. Building Control can be contacted for confirmation of the requirements for all the works discussed herein via the details on page 21.

Permitted Development Rights allow a Householder to construct certain extensions to their property without planning permission. The guide below is intended to show you what can be done without planning permission by householders whose properties have permitted development rights in place, based upon the General Permitted Development Order 2005, to which amendments came into force on 1st October 2008. It should be noted that in the future these rights may be subject to amendment by Government Statute. If you are in any doubt contact the planning department using the contact details on page 21 or alternatively further guidance is provided on the Planning Portal web-site at [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk). It should be noted that the rules are complex and subject to interpretation and exceptions, for instance in Conservation Areas. Almost all works or alterations to a Listed Building will require consent. Therefore, it is recommended that you discuss your proposal with Planning Services before any works commence and seek confirmation that your extension is permitted development in writing or through a Certificate of Lawfulness for a proposed development.

## Enlargement, improvement or other alterations to a dwelling

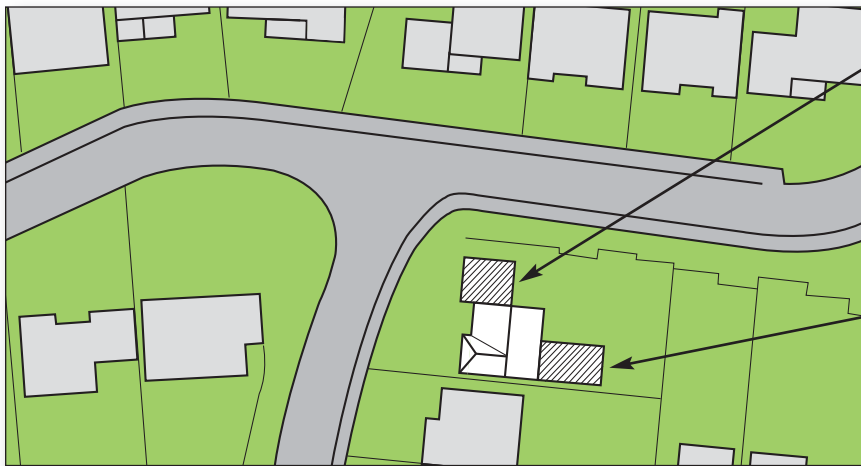
The General Permitted Development Order allows the enlargement, improvement or other alterations to a dwelling house provided it meets certain criteria. These are as follows:

- Any extension must occupy less than 50% of the available garden space.
- The height of the part of the dwelling enlarged, improved or altered must not exceed the height of the highest part of the roof of the existing dwelling.
- The height of the eaves must not exceed the height of the eaves of the existing dwelling.
- The enlarged part of the dwelling house must not extend beyond a wall which fronts a highway and forms either the principal elevation or a side elevation of the original dwelling.
- A single storey extension must not extend beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling by more than 4 metres in the case of detached dwellings and 3 metres in other cases and must not exceed 4 metres in height in both cases.
- If the enlargement to the dwelling is more than one storey, it must not extend beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling by more than 3 metres or be within

7 metres of any boundary of the curtilage of the dwelling opposite the rear wall of the dwelling house.

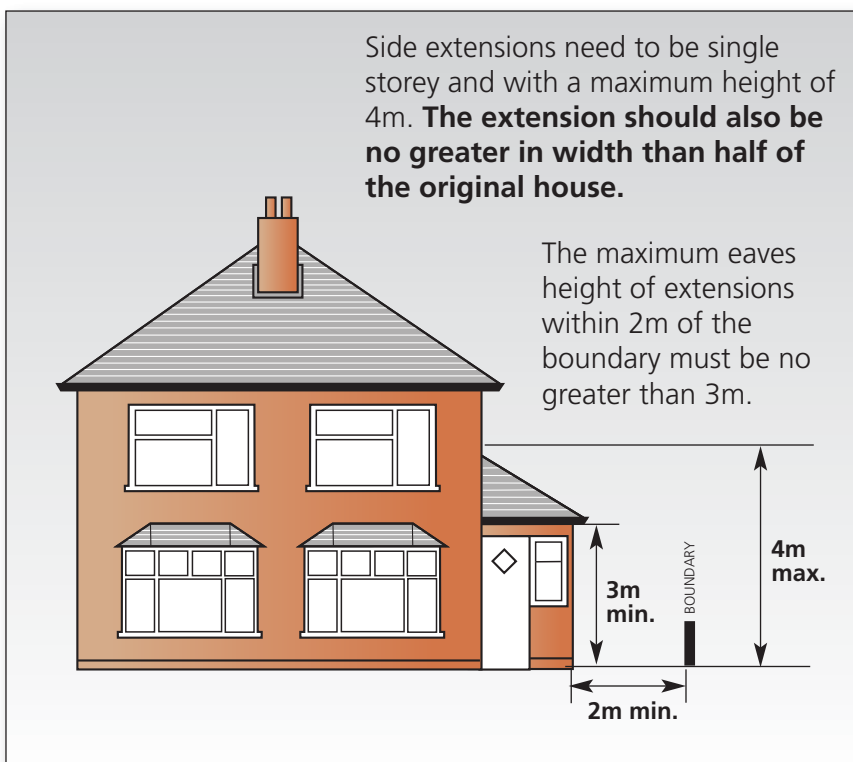
- If the enlarged part of the dwelling would be within 2 metres of any boundary, the height of the eaves of the enlarged part must not exceed 3 metres.
- For extensions extending beyond a wall forming a side elevation of the original dwelling, the extension must not exceed 4 metres in height, be more than one storey or have a width greater than half the width of the original dwelling.

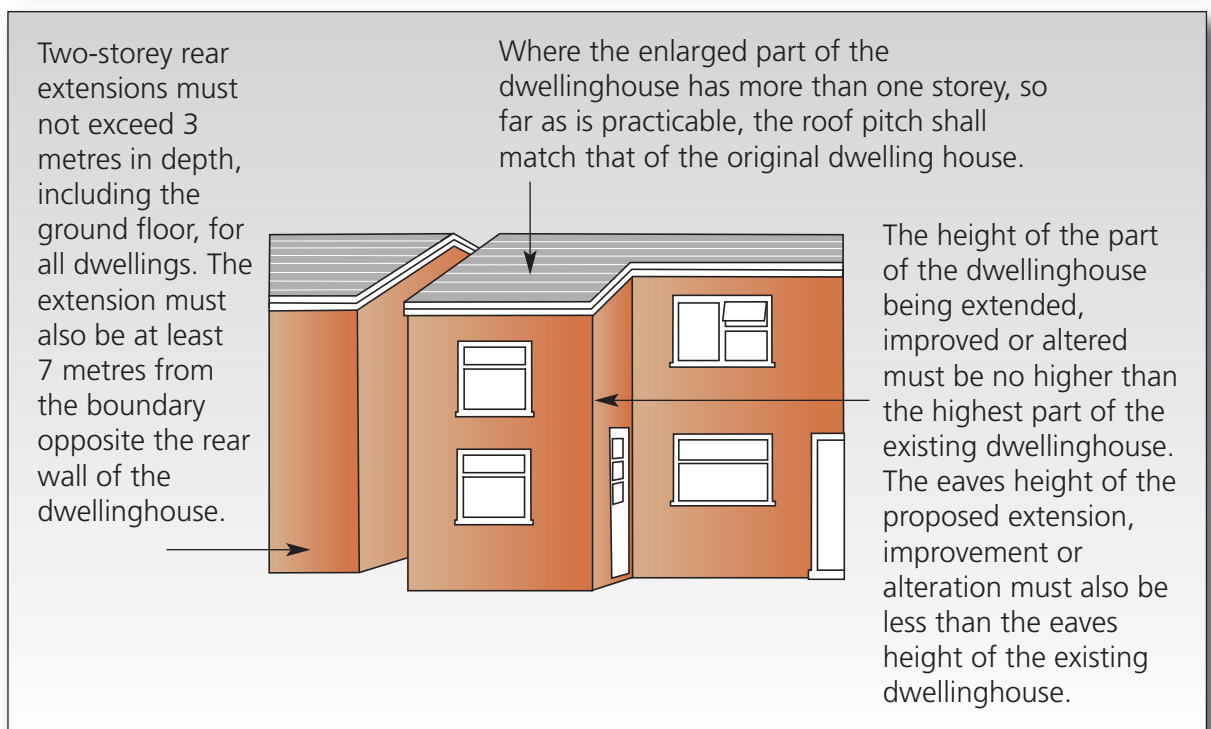
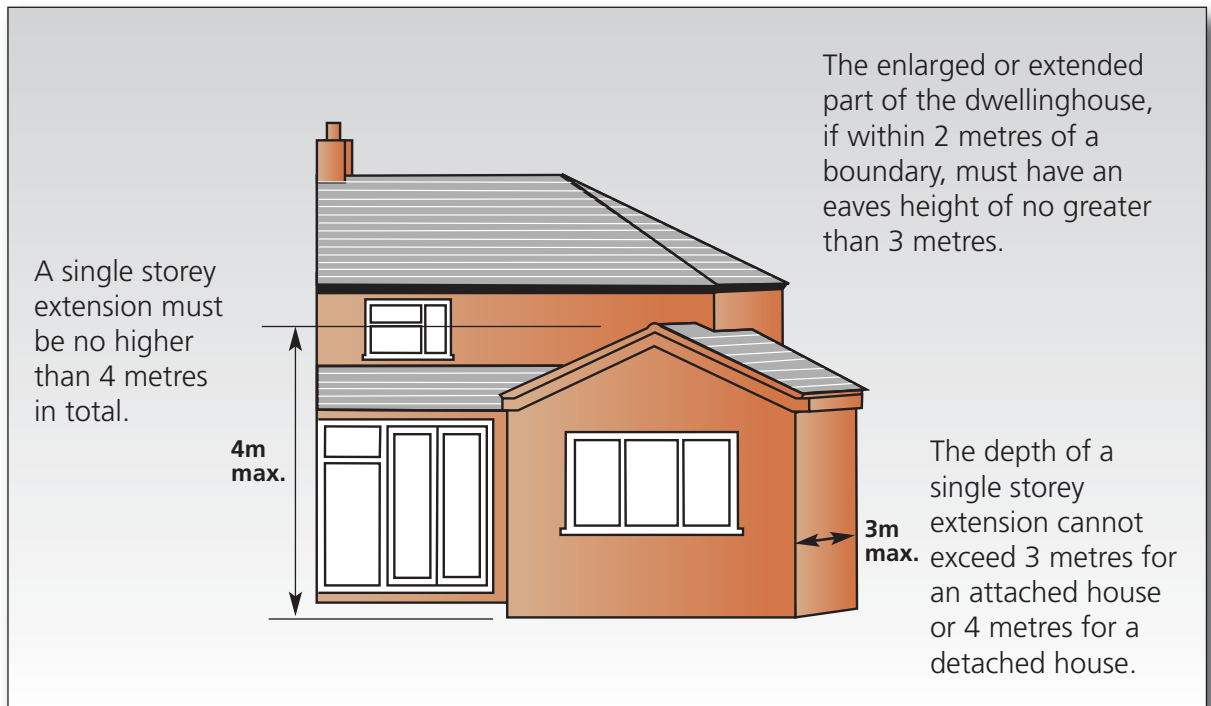
The above is a summary of the criteria set out in Class A of the General Permitted Development Order. For properties that are located in a Conservation Area or are a Listed Building further advice should be sought from Planning Services.



No extensions should be constructed forward of the principal elevation or side elevation fronting a highway.

Two storey extensions can be no closer than seven metres to the rear boundary and no more than 3 metres from the rear wall.





Any extension should also be constructed using similar materials that match the existing dwelling.

No verandas, raised platforms (above 30cm) or balconies are now permitted without planning permission.

Any upper-floor windows located on a side elevation are required to be obscurely glazed, and to be non-opening unless the opening parts of the window are installed at least 1.7 metres above the floor level of the room in which they are installed.

In designated areas, such as those listed on page 22, rear extensions of more than one storey require planning permission, as do side extensions. Properties in designated areas also require permission to clad any part of the exterior of a dwellinghouse with stone, artificial stone, pebbledash, render, timber, plastic or tiles.

## Alterations to a Roof

The alterations to a roof are permitted development provided that:

- The result of the works does not exceed the height of the highest part of the existing roof.
- No works extend beyond the plane of any existing roof slope, which forms the principal elevation of the dwelling or fronts a highway.
- The new cubic content of the roof does not exceed 40 cubic metres in a terraced house or 50 cubic metres in any other case.
- The works do not consist of a veranda, balcony or raised platform.

## Porches

The addition of a porch to the front of a property is treated separately from other extensions, and whether planning permission is required or not is judged on a separate set of rules. Planning permission would not be required for a porch providing:

- The ground area (measured externally) of the structure would measure less than 3 square metres.
- No part of the structure is more than 3 metres above ground level.
- No part of the structure would be within 2 metres of any boundary of the curtilage of the dwelling house with a highway (including footpaths, pavements and roads).

## Dormer Windows

Dormer windows can generally be constructed without the need for planning permission. For a dormer window to be considered permitted development, and therefore not require planning permission, the dormer window must:

- Not exceed the highest part of the existing roof.
- Not extend beyond the plane of any existing roof slope that fronts a highway and forms the principal elevation of the property.
- The cubic content of the resulting roof space would not exceed more than 40 cubic metres for a terrace property, or 50 cubic metres for any other property.
- Not consist of the construction or provision of a veranda, balcony or raised platform or the installation, alteration or replacement of a chimney, flue or soil and vent pipe.

Dormer windows are not permitted without planning permission in Conservation Areas or on Listed Buildings.

## Boundary Walls

The erection, construction, maintenance, improvement or alteration to a gate, fence or means of enclosure can be permitted development provided that:

- The height of the gate, fence, wall or means of enclosure erected or constructed adjacent to the highway used by vehicular traffic would not exceed one metre in height.

- In other cases the gate, wall or other means of enclosure erected or constructed shall not exceed 2 metres above ground level.

On many of the new housing estates that are characterised by open plan frontages these permitted development rights have been removed by the Council. It is therefore recommended that you contact Planning Services before any works commence.

For further details regarding the provision of a hard surface at a property, and the provision of an outbuilding, please contact Planning Services using the contact details provided on page 21.

If your proposed scheme does not fall into the categories detailed above, or your house does not have permitted development rights, you will need to apply for planning permission. The following advice will help you prepare your scheme. It is always beneficial to discuss any extension, alteration or improvement to your dwelling house with Planning Services and neighbours before works commence.



# Preparing your planning application

## Design

- **Why does design matter?**

So that the character and appearance of your home, and the streetscene in general, is not spoilt. A well-designed extension will actually enhance the appearance of your property and the neighbourhood and has the potential to minimise the amount of resources, including energy needed as well as waste and pollution.

- **So, what general design points need to be considered?**

- The need to harmonise with the general character and appearance of the streetscene.
- The particular style of your home.
- The space around the dwelling.
- The roof and window design.
- The effect upon neighbours.

## Considerations to be taken into account

The Council and planning officers will need to balance a large number of factors in considering whether planning permission should be granted for any extensions. The list below is not comprehensive and each factor will need to be given appropriate weight:

- Extent of overlooking / loss of privacy.
- Dominance of extension over neighbours.
- Impact of proposal on streetscene.
- Terracing.
- Impact on design and appearance of dwelling.
- Daylighting and the 45° Guide – see later.
- Impact on trees or other landscape features.
- Access and highway safety.
- Space and amenity standards.
- Window and door details.

# What do I need to do first?

Have a general idea of what you want to do. It is advisable to seek professional help in drawing up plans but that choice is up to you.

When you have a firm idea of what you want to do it is always good practice to go and see your neighbours – try to avoid your extension affecting their privacy or dominating their home. Be prepared to compromise. If planning permission is required, the Council will automatically consult neighbouring householders and will take into account their views.

You may consult with the Council before submitting your planning application to see if your proposal is likely to be acceptable and avoid any unnecessary delays at the application stage. This advice will be given in the spirit of helpfulness and without prejudice to consideration of any formal application, which may be submitted.

Successful planning applications will need to obtain Building Regulations approval where appropriate; if it is required you should submit a formal application or Building Notice before commencing work. Contacts for Building Control are located at the end of this document.

## Sustainable development and extensions

The commonly accepted definition of sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” Brundtland Commission Report 1987.

The Governments Securing the Future: Delivering the UK Sustainable Development Strategy (2005) sets out the guiding principles to achieving sustainable development as:

- Living within environmental limits.
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society.
- Achieving a sustainable economy.
- Promoting good governance.
- Using sound science responsibly.

The Governments Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change sets out how planning should contribute to reducing emissions and stabilising climate change and take into account the unavoidable consequences. Tackling climate change is a key Government priority for the planning system.

Sustainable design is nested within the concept of sustainable development and concentrates on how individual buildings, extensions or groups of buildings can meet the objectives of sustainable development. Sustainable design is concerned with ensuring that:

- The construction of buildings/extensions minimise the amount of resources, including energy, needed as well as waste and pollution.
- The materials used for the construction are environmentally friendly.

- The existing built fabric is re-used as far as possible.
- Buildings/extensions use, or have the potential to use renewable energy sources.
- Buildings/extensions are energy efficient.
- Buildings/extensions have a long life span and can be easily adapted during the course of their life.

There is a particular focus on long-term benefits rather than short term savings, with the whole lifetime of a building or extension considered rather than the here and now. Over its lifetime a sustainably designed building or extension will have cost less to build, heat and light than a conventional building or extension; and will have had a much smaller impact on the environment in terms of the amount of resources it has consumed and waste and pollution produced during its lifetime. These economic and environmental gains have a direct impact on the quality of life in terms of the occupier of a building or extension and society as a whole.

Retrofitting residential properties ensuring that they become more energy efficient can result in a change of appearance and may result in extensions that are not traditional in character. In such circumstances the Council will balance the sustainability gains against any potential visual impact on the surrounding area.

Solihull Council supports well designed energy efficient extensions with the incorporation of small scale renewable energy schemes utilising technologies such as solar panels, biomass heating, small scale wind turbines, photovoltaic cells, ground source heat pumps, biomass boilers, green and living roofs into residential extensions. More importantly, it creates a positive culture change and increases awareness. For further guidance on Renewable Energy Sources please turn to page 17 of the document.

An energy audit is a recommended to be undertaken by the applicant as a first step to identify the most energy efficient option for the building or extension. This might include measures to reduce energy consumption such as the installation of a condensing boiler, additional insulation and the upgrading of windows to minimise draughts and cut carbon emissions.

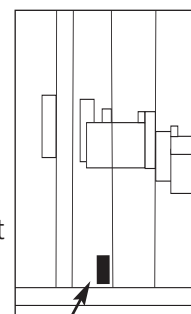
Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis; however, they will be judged in accordance with the design guidance outlined in this document. It is recommended that applicants and agents review Building Regulations Approved Document L series and any subsequent amendments thereto with regard to appropriate methods ensuring that the extension is energy efficient and well insulated.

## Front extensions

Extensions to the front of your house or any elevation that fronts a highway can often be obtrusive and such proposals are unlikely to be given planning permission where they introduce a prominent addition, detract from the overall appearance of the dwelling or unbalance existing harmony in the case of semi-detached and terraced properties. Front building lines are not necessarily sacrosanct and in some instances, where space allows, there may be scope for subservient and well designed extensions at the front of individually designed houses. This may include extensions to properties that are set substantially back from the highway or on staggered building lines, that take due account of the characteristics of the plot and the area in general.

## Detached Garages

The construction of garages and other detached buildings between the house and the road are not normally acceptable unless the building can be accommodated in an unobtrusive position that will not form a prominent feature or impinge on neighbours' amenity. In such instances where plot size is sufficient to accommodate a detached building a landscaping scheme may be required to screen/soften built form.



Obtrusive garage position

## Porches

It should normally be possible to design a porch to meet basic shelter requirements within permitted development allowances detailed on page 5. All porches should be well proportioned and integrate with the style and character of the existing dwelling, using matching facing materials and fenestration detail.

## Parking Provision

To avoid parked vehicles overhanging the pedestrian footpath extensions to the front of a dwelling should normally be able to retain 6 metres of usable driveway length. A minimum distance of 4.8 metres may be acceptable where there is no garage. Before converting a garage to a habitable room, consideration should be given to loss of vehicle parking and storage space. The conversion of a garage to habitable accommodation normally does not require planning permission. Where planning permission is necessary because permitted development rights have been removed. It may not be granted if there is insufficient parking on the property frontage. Additional kerb side parking may compromise road capacity and traffic safety in certain locations.

## Boundary Treatments

Boundary walls and fences adjacent to the road should harmonise with the character and local distinctiveness of the streetscene. Where there is a prevailing character the proposed wall should normally follow the height, style and facing materials within the streetscene to avoid introducing a prominent, hard landscaping feature.

It will not normally be acceptable to erect a front boundary wall/fence in areas of the Borough characterised by an open plan layout. Particular care is needed when proposing side garden walls/fences on corner plots in order to avoid over prominence within the streetscene.

Some modern estates within the Borough are characterised by an "open plan" approach and many properties have covenants within their deeds that prohibit such boundary walls and fences from being erected. This will include areas of open space on road corners and alongside properties. Such areas are very important to the appearance of the area and the Council will generally not allow them to be incorporated into a scheme for the extension of the property in their entirety, although some limited encroachment may be acceptable for a suitably designed scheme.

In instances where high level walls and pillars are acceptable, consideration must be given to available visibility when exiting the driveway to safeguard traffic and pedestrian safety. Gates with vehicle access should normally be set 5.5 metres from the back of the pavement and open inwards to ensure waiting vehicles do not obstruct pedestrian and traffic movements. There may however be instances where this requirement can be relaxed depending on the location of the vehicle access crossing and local traffic conditions.

Landscaping features should, wherever possible, be retained. Alternatively the use of soft landscaping, such as shrubs and native hedges, maintained to an appropriate height can provide an effective boundary that will enhance the green character of a suburban street. For further guidance on appropriate species and densities please contact the Council's Landscape Team on Tel: 0121-704-6391.

## Single storey side extensions

- Single storey side extensions should be designed to integrate with the style and character of the existing dwelling, with consideration given to matching facing materials, fenestration and roof details. The single storey side extensions' ridge height should normally be below the eaves level of a two-storey house to give clear definition between single-storey and two-storey elements.
- Where space permits the retention of a passageway between the side extension and common boundary should be considered. This will enable access for maintenance purposes, allow transportation of refuse and garden waste, without passing through habitable rooms and give the dwelling setting within its own plot.



## First floor/two storey extensions

The space around a dwelling and the gap(s) (if any) to the boundary usually make a very important contribution to the appearance of the house and the character of your neighbourhood.

First floor extensions are therefore of particular concern, and the Council is anxious that such gaps are protected so that detached and semi detached homes do not appear to be terraced, cramped, or unreasonably 'squeezed' into the plot. In some cases, in roads characterised by spacious settings, the gap to the boundary should never be filled, or the space to the boundary may need to be more generous. This is to protect the spacious character of the area and not necessarily to prevent terracing.

Many roads in the Borough contain semi-detached houses linked at ground level by garages three metres or so wide. To erect a usable first floor extension over the garage usually means building to the boundary unless an alternative acceptable siting can be found. This has the potential for a terracing effect, which the Council will normally resist.

### The following criteria will apply to first floor extensions:

- Any terracing effect between dwellings is to be avoided. A reasonable gap to the boundary must be retained of at least 1-metre in most cases. A larger gap will be necessary for properties in spacious settings. This will also apply, where appropriate, to rear extensions. It should also be noted that extensions that occur behind the main building line should not close off the reasonable gap.



✗ Terracing effect and loss of gap between properties originally built as semi-detached

- The space on corner plots between the dwelling and the road makes an important contribution to the open and green character of suburban areas and often emphasises a road junction. As each corner plot is unique, a side or indeed rear extension will need to be considered in context with the surrounding area, the building line to the rear of the plot and any existing landscaping features. Side extensions should not compromise road safety or visibility splays. A side extension must be in proportion to the existing dwelling and a generous gap should normally be retained to preserve the openness of the corner plot.
- To ensure the extension is well proportioned its width should normally be significantly less than the width of the original dwelling. The cumulative effects of extensions to the property will be considered.
- In instances where the side boundary tapers away from the dwelling the extension should be parallel to the dwelling and not follow the boundary. This is to ensure integration with the host dwelling and a simple roof design.
- Some modern estates within the Borough are characterised by an “open plan” approach. This will include areas of open space on road corners and alongside properties. Such areas are very important to the appearance of the area and the Council will generally not allow them to be incorporated into a scheme for the extension of the property in their entirety, although some limited encroachment may be acceptable for a suitably designed scheme.
- Most first floor extensions should be subservient to the existing dwelling in design and external appearance, with a lower ridge height and set back from the front main wall of the house. This should normally be a minimum of 440mm to be effective. The Council will normally seek to ensure extensions are subservient for the following reasons:
  - To create a visual break in the ridge line and front main walls.
  - To retain the original proportions of the dwellings.
  - To retain symmetry between semi-detached dwellings.
  - To ensure the extension does not visually compete with the main dwelling.
  - To minimise the impact upon the open space between dwellings.
  - To reduce prominence within the streetscene.
  - To help with bonding and matching materials.



### Subservient extensions

The Council will consider the merits of each proposal, continuity of design and its context within the streetscene. There may be instances where an extension will require a greater level of subservience. Alternatively, a different design approach may achieve the same aims.

Particular house types are detailed below:

- **Detached dwellings** may also require subservient design for first floor extensions with a lower ridge height and a set back from the front main wall of the house by a minimum of 440mm. However, in certain circumstances such as gable-end detached dwellings, particularly of narrow width, depth, shallow pitches or properties with a prominent forward gable projection, non-subservient extension will be considered. However, the extension should remain proportionate and retain a balanced appearance to the dwelling. Nevertheless an adequate gap to the side boundary must be maintained.



**Dwelling with shallow pitch**



**Dwelling with dominant front gable**

- **Semi-detached dwellings** are normally designed as a pair and in order not to upset the symmetry of the architectural unit a first floor side extension must be subservient. The minimum set back from the front main wall should be 440mm on a hipped roof or gable design dwelling in order to ensure continuity of design and to retain the balance of the property unless an alternative design approach has been taken at the adjoining semi detached property.



**✗ Overdominant/unbalancing**



**✓ Subservient**

- On semi-detached dwellings with a side cat-slide roof that creates a distinctive 'v' shape between each architectural unit the set back should be a minimum of 1-metre to help retain the original proportions of the front main wall and cat-slide roof.
- A subservient ridge height will not normally be required on detached, gable-fronted dwellings, which have a shallow roof pitch. Nevertheless a 1 metre set back from the front main wall of the dwelling will be required to retain the dwelling's original proportions.



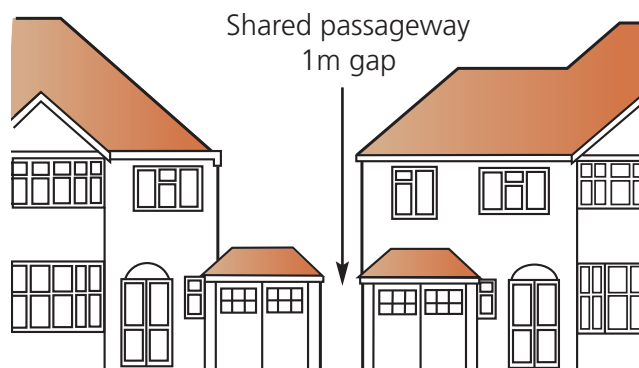
**Distinctive 'V' shape between dwellings**



**✓ Subservient**



- An end of **terrace building** will not normally be required to have a subservient extension to ensure a continuity of design is provided. However, the rhythm and proportions of the existing terraced block should be maintained. An adequate gap between the extension and the boundary should still be retained.



**Closely related dwellings with a shared access**

- Where there is a 1m wide joint passageway between otherwise closely related dwellings or where there is little likelihood of the gap to the boundary of the adjacent dwelling being filled, that space may be considered sufficient to prevent terracing. In such instances the extension must be made subservient with a minimum 440mm set back from the front main wall of the house, minimising the impact on the remaining gap between dwellings.

## Rear extensions

- As with all extensions, a rear extension should be designed to integrate with the style and character of the existing dwelling, with consideration given to matching facing materials and fenestration.
- Flat roofs may be acceptable only on single storey extensions when they are not visible from public views, however the Council considers pitched roofs to be a better design solution and easier for future maintenance. First floor rear extensions should have an integrating roof that respects the existing pitches of the main house.
- First floor side facing windows on rear projections located close to the adjoining boundary can cause overlooking or the perception of overlooking and will not be permitted where they face directly onto private rear garden areas. Smaller windows to non-habitable rooms (e.g. landing, toilet, en-suite etc) may be acceptable where they have obscure glazing and top-opening lights. Obscure glazing refers to patterned or frosted glass/glazing materials which let in light but restrict clear vision.
- Particular care is needed where balconies are proposed. The Council's main priority is to retain privacy to neighbours' habitable rooms and private gardens. Where overlooking will occur balconies will normally be resisted.
- Conservatories and extensions which have predominantly glazed elevations located close to the adjoining boundary should have obscure glazed top lights as the higher internal level may enable overlooking onto a neighbouring rear garden or windows. It may also be appropriate to require boundary fencing to be increased in height or retained by condition to ensure that neighbouring privacy is not compromised.
- It should normally be possible to erect a detached garden building, such as a shed or garage, under permitted development allowances. For details of the permitted development allowances relating to garden structures and outbuildings please contact Planning Services using the contact details on page 21. Garden structures should aim to reflect the style of the dwelling and an adequate level of amenity space must be retained in the back garden. Consider carefully the location of detached garden buildings.



# Roofs and chimney stacks

- Avoid flat roofs – they are prone to long term maintenance problems and often look ugly, unless they respect the prevailing character of the area.



## **X Flat roof – poor integration, unsightly, future maintenance problems**

- Use a pitched or hipped roof dependent on the character of the home.
- Normally the roof extension should respect the pitch and ridge heights of the main house.
- Avoid clumsy junctions between new and old guttering.
- Use tiles from the back of the house on the front to help improve integration of the extension.



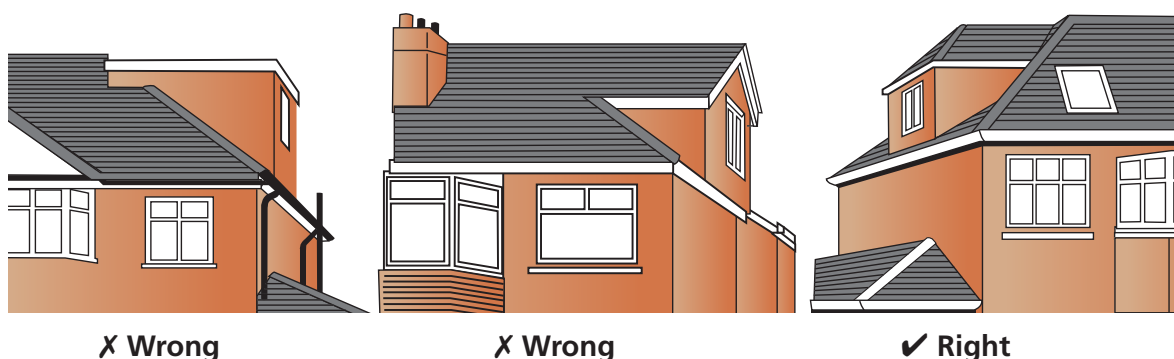
- Chimneystacks make an important contribution to the character and appearance of your home, the streetscene and the skyline. Extensions and roof alterations should not result in the loss of a dwelling's chimneystack and the Council will ensure, wherever practical, that a feature chimney is retained.

## Dormer windows

In normal circumstances dormer window extensions may be constructed under permitted development allowances detailed on page 5 or seek further advice from the Planning Department. However Building Regulation approval will be required. The following criteria will apply for dormer window extensions:

- Dormer windows should be modest, well proportioned and in keeping with the vertical proportions of the main elevations.
- Dormer windows should sit exclusively within the roof plane they are located on, away from the edges of the roof. Wrap around dormers will not be permitted.
- Dormer windows should be set below the main ridge so as not to dominate the existing roof. The bottom edge of any dormer should be set above the eaves line of the existing roof unless the style of the property requires otherwise, for example a cottage style property with dormers breaking the eaves line.
- Avoid large box dormers on rear elevations.
- Planning permission is automatically required for dormer windows located on a roof slope fronting a highway. Due to their prominence such dormers will normally be resisted unless they are an established part of the character of the streetscene, particularly well designed, proportioned and unobtrusive.

Most side dormers that afford access to loft conversions invariably look very clumsy and should be avoided. Wrap-around dormers or dormers above the ridge height will almost always be refused, as they are rarely so unobtrusive as to be acceptable. The dwelling may not be suitable for a loft conversion if the dormer window cannot comply with the above guidance.



## Extensions to properties in flood zones

For extensions to properties that are located within flood zones 2 and 3, which are generally around the main rivers in the Borough (as defined by standing advice given by the Environment Agency), the floor levels within the extensions should be set 300mm above the known or modelled (1 in 100 chance year) river flood level. If this information is not available, the floor levels within the proposed extension should not be set lower than the existing levels with flood proofing of the extension being incorporated where appropriate.

For further advice please refer to the Environment Agency standing advice at [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

# Style and character

Try to follow the style, character and appearance of your original home. Extensions should provide design continuity and harmonise with the existing dwelling. Ensuring this will help to maintain the character of your house and retain an appealing streetscene.

## Materials

- Match the colour and texture of the facing brick or render of the existing house.
- Try to match the brick size, bonding and mortar colour.
- Continue string courses or any other special features.
- Use the same colour, pattern, texture and type of tiles.

## Windows and doors

- Use the same pattern of windows and doors as on the existing house carrying through the line of cills and lintels. Ensure that the proportions of the window and door modules are replicated to maintain a balanced appearance. First floor windows are often used for fire escapes and minimum sizes may need to be applied to meet Building Regulations approval.
- Use the same shape and alignment of materials as the existing house.

## Renewable energy sources

Solihull Council supports well designed energy efficient extensions with the incorporation of small scale renewable energy schemes utilising technologies such as solar panels, biomass heating, small scale wind turbines, photovoltaic cells, green or living roofs, and ground source heat pumps into residential extensions. They will be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the design guidance.

### Photovoltaic (PV) Cells and Solar Thermal Equipment

For the highest efficiency of photovoltaic cells and panels for solar water heating systems, an un-shaded south facing aspect is recommended, although an un-shaded southeast and southwest aspect can be still viable. The cells and panels should preferably be integrated into the existing roof tiling systems or laid at the same angle as the roof pitch.



## Wind Turbines

Small or micro wind turbines represent a relatively low-cost method of micro-renewable electricity generation for residential purposes, providing varying amounts of electricity generation and carbon dioxide savings depending on the house. In order to ensure that the wind turbines deliver energy expected from their rated capacity, it is important that they are installed at elevated positions with minimised obstruction between turbine and prevailing winds. They are normally visually prominent and vibration generated by them can make integration into existing buildings and built up areas difficult.

When considering a wind turbine applications consideration will be given to issues such as siting, structural loading, vibration, noise generation height, prevailing wind direction and average wind speed and proximity to trees and other buildings and structures. Noise and visual strobe effect may be an amenity issue.

## Ground Source Heat Pumps

A couple of metres below the Earth's surface, the temperature is a constant 10-12 °C. Water can be circulated to this depth and warmed to this temperature before passing through a heat pump. These systems are most effective if they form part of under-floor heating system. Ground source heat pumps will require a borehole or trench to accommodate the 'ground loop' which transfers heat from below the ground to a building or extension.

## Bio – Mass Boilers

One of the principal issues with bio-mass boilers is the need for a flue pipe from the boiler which would normally have to rise to the level of the ridge line of the structure in which the boiler is housed. If there is an existing chimney stack this can sometimes be used. However, if no chimney can be employed for this purpose then a stand alone flue will be required. It is vital that the location, size and type of flue is discussed at an early stage.

## Green or Living roofs

Green or living roofs consist of vegetation such as sedum planted on a substrate a few centimetres thick on top of a waterproof membrane. A number of manufacturers have developed substrates, drainage layers, waterproof membranes and pre-planted mats, meaning green roofs can be easily made to measure. Green roofs can be installed on roof slopes between 1.5 and 20 degrees and with more complex systems, green roofs are possible on slopes of up to 30 degrees.

Living roofs provide high levels of insulation reducing power used by heating and air conditioning and making building or extensions more comfortable to occupy. Living roofs typically absorb between 50% to 80% of rain that falls on them, reducing the chances of flash flooding. The retention of moisture helps to reduce the 'heat island' effect in urban areas in summer. Living roofs absorb atmospheric and noise pollution as well as providing an undisturbed habitat for birds and insects. Although they can be energy intensive to manufacture, the environmental and economic benefits of green roofs can offset this.

## Grey Water/Rainwater Re-Use

Water that is passed through basins and kitchens or collected from roofs can be filtered and re-used for uses where clean water is not needed, such as toilets and watering the garden etc.

# Impact on your neighbours

## How might your extension affect neighbours?

The main impact upon neighbours is through loss of direct sunlight or general daylight, a general overbearing or dominating effect from an extension that is too large or too close to the adjacent property and unreasonable loss of privacy from overlooking windows, particularly at first floor level. In order to safeguard the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring dwellings the Council will normally apply the following standards:

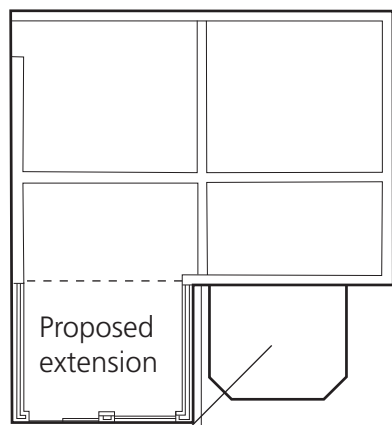
- The 45-Degree Guide

The Council will apply the 45-degree guide (see following sketches) to what is likely to be acceptable when drawing up an extension. First floor extensions are usually the cause of most neighbours' concerns as they can have a greater effect upon outlook and light levels than single storey extensions. A first floor extension that breaches the 45-degree guide will normally be unacceptable. Single storey extensions are usually considered with greater flexibility given that permitted development rights allow a terraced/semi detached property to extend to the rear by 3 metre and a detached by 4 metres. The 45-degree guide will not always be appropriate and in certain cases there will be other factors that will carry as much and potentially more weight, such as orientation, and changes in levels.

The 45-degree angle will be calculated from the centre point of the nearest main habitable room window (bow, bay or flush-fitting) on the neighbouring property and any extension that breaches that angle can reasonably be expected to affect outlook and light to neighbouring properties.

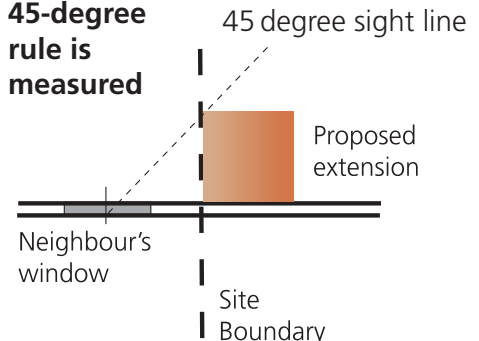
- Side facing windows, which are secondary to a rear-facing window, will not normally be considered.
- If your neighbour has an existing extension adjoining the boundary the calculation will be taken from the centre point of the nearest habitable room window in that extension.
- If your neighbour has a glazed or partly glazed conservatory, the calculation will be taken from the mid point of the overall depth of the conservatory.
- If your neighbour has a full or solid side facing brick wall designed conservatory, the calculation will be taken from the centre point of the window on that conservatory in that extension.
- Side facing kitchen windows will not receive the same amount of protection of daylight standards.

Existing glazed conservatory adjacent to extension



45 degree sight line

How the 45-degree rule is measured



**Habitable rooms include:**

- Kitchens
- Living rooms
- Dining rooms
- Main bedrooms
- Small bedrooms/  
box rooms

**Non-habitable rooms include:**

- Garages
- Bathrooms
- Halls and landings
- Utility Rooms

## Your neighbour's property

Sometimes the construction of an extension on or close to your neighbour's property means that the eaves or gutters will overhang the boundary, or the foundations need to encroach onto your neighbour's land. This can often lead to a neighbour dispute and it is usually best to design the extension so that **all works** are within the boundary of your own property.

If your extension **does** encroach, we advise that you discuss the matter with your neighbours first and obtain their permission: your planning application will need to confirm that you have served due legal notice on your neighbours. You also have a duty to resolve matters under the Party Wall Act with them, should this be relevant to your proposal. A leaflet explaining this Act is available from Planning Services.

## Extensions in the green belt

Properties which fall inside the Green Belt have tighter restrictions placed on them in terms of development. In order to preserve the openness of the Green Belt, there is a presumption against inappropriate development, and as such the Council seeks to limit extensions to dwellings to ensure that they are not disproportionate. Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 – Green Belts confirms that limited extensions are appropriate provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

Most householders are able to perform a certain level of extensions without planning permission under permitted development rights (see pages 2-5), however extensions further to those detailed on pages 2-6 will require planning permission.

As well as ensuring that the external appearance and design of any extensions are appropriate to their surroundings, it is the concern of the Council to ensure that extensions should not turn small houses or cottages into mansions within the Green Belt. The cumulative effect of previous extensions will be taken into account.

For this reason the Council will limit extensions to any property to no more than 40% of the original habitable floor space measured externally (original being the habitable floor space when the property was built, or as it was on 1st July 1948 if built before this date). These restrictions apply to all properties outside settlements in the Green Belt. The policy will not be applicable to properties within established ribbons of development, but will be applicable to those properties on the ends of ribbons of development. A ribbon of development is a continuous run of dwellings, which closely relate to one another and are not sporadic. The 40% permissible is inclusive of any extensions carried out under permitted development rights, and or any unimplemented approvals. All measurements are taken externally.

When calculating permissible floor area, any buildings within 5 metres or extensions that are to be demolished can be deducted from the allowable floor area of the proposal, so, if a property has an original floor area of 100m<sup>2</sup>, the permissible increase would be up to an additional 40m<sup>2</sup>. If the proposal included demolition of 10m<sup>2</sup> of original floor area, this could be added to the allowance enabling a 50m<sup>2</sup> increase. The applicant may revoke unimplemented prior permissions in order to allow for increases in floor space to dwellings with the approval of the local authority.

In all cases the Council will require a detailed survey, which shows the curtilage, dwelling and its outbuildings.

Proposals falling within the 40% tolerance detailed above will not automatically be granted permission, as the application will be subject to the same considerations as detailed in the rest of this document.

## General matters

Planning application forms are available on our website: [www.solihull.gov.uk](http://www.solihull.gov.uk) or at [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk). These set out details of the plans that need to be submitted together with details of the proposal, a certificate of ownership and fee details.

### **Secured by design**

Extensions should not compromise the security of your own or neighbouring premises. If you destroy natural surveillance, you may be creating an environment in which the criminal can work unhindered.

If you wish to discuss security any further, talk to the Crime Prevention Officer at your local police station.

### **Can I obtain further advice from the Council?**

Yes. If having read these guidelines you would like to discuss your ideas with the Council before proceeding, please contact a Planning Officer who will be pleased to assist: we want to help you to get your application right first time.

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council Planning Services

Address:

Head of Design and Development,  
PO Box 11652, Council House, Solihull B91 9YA  
Telephone Enquiries: 0121 704 8008.

Building Control can be contacted via our main switchboard on 0121 704 8008.

# Designated areas

Designated areas, where further permitted development restrictions apply as detailed on pages 2-6 are as follows:

## Conservation Areas

There are 20 Conservation Areas in the Borough of Solihull. These are areas that have particular local historical or architectural merit. This list details the conservation areas in the borough. The exact locations covered by the conservation areas can be obtained by contacting the planning department via the contact details on page 21.

The 20 Solihull Conservation Areas are:

- Ashleigh Road Conservation Area, also subject to an Article 4 Direction.
- Barston Conservation Area
- Berkswell Conservation Area
- Bickenhill Conservation Area
- Castle Bromwich Conservation Area
- Grove Avenue Conservation Area
- Granville Road Conservation Area
- Hampton-In-Arden Conservation Area
- Knowle Conservation Area, part covered by an Article 4 Direction.
- Malvern Hall / Brueton Avenue Conservation Area
- Malvern Park Farm Conservation Area
- Meriden Green Conservation Area
- Meriden Hill Conservation Area
- Olton Conservation Area
- Solihull Town Centre Conservation Area
- Station Approach, Dorridge Conservation Area
- Temple Balsall Conservation Area
- Walsal End Conservation Area
- Warwick Road Conservation Area
- White House Way Conservation Area, also subject to an Article 4 Direction.

\* Article 4 Directions remove permitted development rights granted under the General Permitted Development Order.

## Listed Buildings

Listed buildings, and properties within the curtilage of a listed building, are subject to more strict legislation with development that can and cannot take place. Please contact Planning Services for further advice.



# Consultation Statement

In compiling the House Extensions SPD the consultation process included: -

- Informal Agents Forum
- Planning Services (Development Control/Forward Planning)
- Council Members

**Attached is a list of bodies consulted on the SPD. These include:**

- Statutory Bodies
- Neighbouring Local Authorities
- Parish/Town Councils (Solihull)
- Neighbouring Parish/Town Councils
- Community and Residents Organisations
- Government Departments/Organisations/Statutory Undertakers
- Members of Parliament (Local)
- Agents
- Action, Community and Voluntary groups
- SMBC internal consultees

In addition the SPD documentation has been publicised as follows:

- Notices were placed in two local newspapers (Solihull Times and Solihull News) to advertise the availability of the SPD documentation, its content, including where and when it could be inspected, this included the consultation period and the means of making a response.
- Inclusion of the SPD documentation on the Council's web-site at [www.solihull.gov.uk/LDF](http://www.solihull.gov.uk/LDF) where there was also an on-line form for making responses.
- A statement of SPD matters.
- A copy of the documentation was available for inspection at the Borough's public libraries.
- A copy of the documentation was available at Solihull Connect Centres.
- A paper response form was also included with the documentation to enable written responses.
- Paper copies of the documentation were available on request.

The consultation period ended on Wednesday 1st July 2009. The findings of consultation were reported to the Council's Planning Committee on 25th November 2009 and to the Council's Cabinet Member for Community and Economic Regeneration on 10th February 2010 together with the recommended changes to the SPD resulting from the consultation response. A schedule was attached to the report summarising the representations received, setting out requested changes and providing Council's response. The report together with changes to the SPD was agreed for adoption by the Cabinet Member.

The adopted SPD (together with this consultation statement and a statement of adoption) is available on the Council's web-site at [www.solihull.gov.uk](http://www.solihull.gov.uk). The adopted SPD can be inspected at Solihull Connect. Respondents that asked to be notified of the adoption of the SPD were notified.

# List of consultees

## Neighbouring Local Authorities

Birmingham City Council  
Bromsgrove District Council  
Coventry City Council  
North Warwickshire Borough Council  
Stratford on Avon District Council  
Warwick District Council  
Warwickshire County Council  
Worcestershire County Council

## Parish and Town Councils

Balsall Parish Council  
Barston Parish Council  
Berkswell Parish Council  
Bickenhill Parish Council  
Castle Bromwich Parish Council  
Chelmsley Wood Town Council  
Fordbridge Town Council  
Hampton-In-Arden Parish Council  
Hockley Heath Parish Council  
Kingshurst Parish Council  
Meriden Parish Council  
Smith's Wood Parish Council

## Neighbouring Parish and Town Councils

Allesley Parish Council  
Baddesley Clinton Parish Council  
Beausale, Haseley, Honiley & Wroxall Parish Council  
Coleshill Town Council  
Fillongley Parish Council  
Great and Little Packington Parish Council  
Kenilworth Town Council  
Lapworth Parish Council  
Stoneleigh & Ashow Parish Council  
Tanworth-in-Arden Parish Council  
Water Orton Parish Council  
Wythall Parish Council

## Community and Residents Organisations

Balsall Common Village Residents Association  
Bentley Heath Residents Association  
Billsmore Green Residents Association  
Catherine-de-Barnes Residents Association  
Cheswick Green Residents Association  
Dickens Heath Community Association  
Dorridge & District Residents Association  
Fordbridge Area Resident's Association  
Fordbridge Residents Association  
Harwood Grove Residents Association  
Hockley Heath Residents Association  
Lawnswood Residents Association  
Marston Green Residents Association  
Olton Residents Association  
Shirley Residents Association  
Solihull Residents Association  
Tidbury Green Residents Association  
Triangle Residents Association  
White House Residents Association  
Woodlands Residents Action Group

## Government Departments / Organisations/ Statutory Undertakers

Network Rail  
Natural England  
English Heritage  
Natural England  
Government Office for the West Midlands  
Highways Agency  
Solihull Friends of the Earth  
The Environment Agency  
West Midlands Fire Service HQ  
West Midlands Police

## Members of Parliament

Lorely Burt MP  
Caroline Spelman MP

# List of consultees continued

## Agents

Abacus Chartered Architects	Pearce Cutler Windows Ltd
David Thorp Architects	Alan Dutton
Gurmukhi Building Design Ltd	Mr Roberst M Floyd
Andrews and Hazzard Architects	Planaconstruct
Lapworth Partnership	Donald Hayes
Circa Design	Mr K Head
Brophy Riaz & Partners	Peter Benniman
Mr Lee Jones	Cross and Craig Associates
R.M. Design	Konstrukshon
David Sage	Building Plans Direct
Pams Plans	Martyn Bramich Associates
Tyler Parkes Partnership	ACL Consultants
Ian Wright Associates Midlands Ltd	Mr G J Smalley
Mr K Chandler	Progression Architects Ltd
Design Logic	Plan AM
David G Barton Ltd	Alan Smith Associates
Michael Edwards Associates	Banner Homes (Midlands) Ltd
Design Logic	Chapman Design
Gould Singleton Architects	AT Architects
DW2 Ltd	DW Plan Services
ARC Building Design	Fellows Burt Dalton & Associates
Alan Cox Design	Mr F B Fisk
Mr Gary Briddick	Mr Tim Bailey
Kenton Manor	Garfield Davis Architectural Ltd
Drawing and Contract Management	Conservatory Planning Services
Hampton Architecture	Alan Neilson
Chatan Chauhan	Enterprise Planning Services
Edgware Street Ltd	Building Plans Direct
Dilworth Design	

## Action, Community and Voluntary Groups

CPRE

Disabled People's Network-Solihull

Disabled Persons Network

Knowle Parish Church Youth in Action

North Solihull Regeneration Partnership -EC Harris

Solihull Chamber of Trade

Solihull Society for the Physically Handicapped

Warwickshire Rural Community Council

## SMBC Internal Consultees

All Solihull Council Members

Community Services, Transport and Highways

Strategic Services, Community and Economic Regeneration

Strategic Services, Solicitors

# Response to Consultation

## List of Respondents

ACL Consultants  
Balsall Parish Council  
Peter Benniman  
Castle Bromwich Parish Council  
Chelmsley Town Council  
Circa Design  
Richard Cobb  
Construction Planning Services  
Cross and Craig Associates  
Dilworth Design  
DW Plan Services  
Enterprise Planning Services  
Environment Agency  
English Heritage  
Highways Agency  
Friends of the Earth  
Hampton Architecture  
Marston Green Residents Association  
Pams Plans  
Planaconstruct  
RM Design  
David Sage  
Shirley Residents Association  
White House Way Residents Association  
Wythall Parish Council

## Responses to Question 1 of the consultation form

<b>Question 1</b>	Yes	Yes but reservations	No
Do you agree with the principles of the House Extension Guidelines SPD?	6	11	1
5 detailed letters of response were received. However, they did not answer Question 1 but raised comments on the SPD.			

Summary and Change requested	Our Response/Action
There should be further guidelines concerning domestic extensions located in flood zones 2 and 3.	Agree that guidelines need to make reference to extension within flood zones. <b>SPD modified</b>
The Strategic Road Network within the Highways Agency control would be unaffected by any of the proposed advice contained in this document.	No comments warranted. <b>No change</b>
The Guidelines are well written and illustrated and are important in maintaining consistency. No specific changes.	No comments warranted. <b>No change</b>
A good controlling guide to future developments of home extensions.	No comments warranted. <b>No change</b>
No specific comments on the SPD x 4	No comments warranted. <b>No change</b>
No comments were necessary	No comments warranted. <b>No change</b>
First Floor and Two Storey Extensions – the set back should be 450mm not 1m as suggested due to strange looking extensions.	Guidelines have been modified to require a 440mm set back on semi detached and detached properties, but maintained for dwellings with distinctive 'v'-shaped roofs to protect the design feature. <b>SPD modified in part.</b>
Green Belt Extensions – The calculation seems incorrect and should read 50m <sup>2</sup> not 40m <sup>2</sup> increase.	Text simplified and modified to correct error. <b>SPD modified.</b>
Whilst the principles of House Extensions Guidelines is agreed there should be more authority for planning officers to look at a proposal in isolation and not just revert to the guidelines as a mandatory tool.	The modified version of the guidelines provide flexibility for Officers to consider the merits of each individual planning application to ensure extensions harmonise with existing dwelling. <b>SPD modified.</b>
Reduction in the gap of first floor to side boundary from a 1m to 0.5m. This would therefore allow more achievable side extensions rather than basically 'ugly' loft conversions.	The gaps between properties make an important contribution to the character of the area, reducing the gap between dwellings would impact on the character and appearance of the area and streetscene. <b>No change.</b>

Summary and Change requested	Our Response/Action
<p>Generally approving of the proposed guidelines with the exception of the Green Belt Extensions. A sliding scale based on original footprint would be more flexible than a one size fits all.</p>	<p>The guidelines set an upper limit for the consideration of disproportionate additions to dwellings in the Green Belt. A more flexible approach would be difficult to administer. <b>No change.</b></p>
<p>The Section on PD Rights does not make it clear what is PD - which is probably too complicated to try to set out (and for most people in the profession, to understand either!) in any document. Better to leave that to CLG documentation or the interactive Guide than to try to do it, than fail to cover it properly or comprehensively, and confuse everyone. If it is to be useful it should cover all the domestic PD issues or none at all.</p>	<p>Summary of permitted development rights has been updated and extended to cover a number of classes. The section provides important guidance for residents and provides links to supporting web-sites. <b>SPD modified.</b></p>
<p>Parking provision - conversion of a garage normally does not need PP. The reference to PP 'may not be granted.....' should relate to proposals that need PP rather than imply , as it does, that it applies also where the proposals are PD.</p>	<p>Additional text inserted into SPD to clarify matter. <b>SPD modified.</b></p>
<p>Sketch of 45° rule could be a lot clearer for understanding by a non-technical person.</p>	<p>Additional sketch diagrams to be included in final publication to clarify 45-degree guide. <b>SPD modified.</b></p>
<p>It might be useful to repeat the advice in PPG2 on extensions.</p>	<p>Reference to advice contained in PPG2 on disproportionate additions incorporated. <b>SPD modified.</b></p>



Summary and Change requested	Our Response/Action
<p>The sudden change from 20% to 40% reverses Policy over the last 30 years or so. Is it gross internal or external? Although it may be welcomed by many developers and architects so that it can maximise what they can obtain for their Clients, it will tend to open the floodgates and at such a high level will lead to disproportionate extensions that may not be appropriate or allowable even in urban areas , and does throw up inconsistencies between adjoin councils in the GB - it would be sensible to check others around and try to find common ground.</p>	<p>Guidelines are consistent with other local planning authorities in the local area, whilst having regard to extensions that can be erected under permitted development. Clarification that provided that measurements are taken externally. <b>SPD modified.</b></p>
<p>Applicants should include a full floor plan survey of their house with calculations to show both the original dwelling and any extensions and garden buildings.</p>	<p>Guidance includes the requirement to submit full survey drawings of the existing dwelling. <b>No change.</b></p>
<p>Reference to Ribbons of 10 Dwellings is not understood - better to say recognised ribbons for what is the difference between 8 or 9 dwellings and 10 etc.</p>	<p>Guidance amended to clarify that a ribbon of development is a continuous run of development, which closely relate to one another and not sporadic. <b>SPD modified.</b></p>
<p>Proposed guide states incorrectly that the eaves height of a two-storey extension should be less than that of the original dwellinghouse. This should read that it should be no more than the height of the eaves of the original dwellinghouse.</p>	<p>Text amended in accordance with GPDO. <b>SPD modified.</b></p>
<p>Detached dwellings in most cases a set back is not necessary. An extension could appear to be stuck on and therefore the affect of this restriction will support weak/poor design.</p>	<p>The amended Guidance provides flexibility to consider non-subservient extensions, whilst ensuring they remain proportionate. <b>SPD modified.</b></p>
<p>Dormer window section should be amended to say that the following criteria will apply to dormer window extensions requiring planning consent.</p>	<p>Guidance modified to advise in normal circumstances dormer windows can be erected under permitted development. <b>SPD modified.</b></p>

